

GUARDIAN ANGELS.

BY REV. JAMES STEVENS.



THE belief in guardian angels is not wholly without warrant. There is, indeed, no direct authority for it in Scripture; but neither does Holy Writ condemn it; while many analogies suggest it to be peculiarly in harmony with the Providence of God. Few things impress us so deeply with the love and care of our heavenly Father as the thought that he has set his angels to watch over us, so that whether we are friendless or in prosperity, whether we are in a strange land or among our kindred, ministering hands are round about us, a fence and a shield from evil, if we will but submit to their guidance. As Milton says,

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."

Who can look upon children asleep, yet doubt that there are guardian angels? In the sweet, placid faces of the slumbering innocents there is a holiness which belongs not to earth, as if the countenances were irradiated from invisible spiritual watchers. The beautiful Irish tradition, which says that when an infant smiles it is because the angels are whispering to it, is no mere poetical fancy. In the soul of childhood there still lingers something of the light of the heaven from which it has come; and that holy messengers do not disdain to visit it, to gaze lovingly upon it, to influence it insensibly to a life of goodness, is not irrational to believe. Gleams of this truth, broke on Wordsworth, when he wrote his "Intimations of Immortality."

"Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home;
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!"

Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

There are those who believe that it is the especial privilege of "the loved and lost" to be thereafter the guardian watchers of the living who are left behind. Such a persuasion has dried many a mourner's tear. In the overwhelming grief which death brings, it is a relief unspeakable to think that the lamented parent, the cherished partner, or the darling child are still with us, separated only by a division as thin as air, sympathizing with us, watching over us, silently persuading us to holy actions. Often has such a conviction checked the rising thought of evil, and turned the tempted and erring back to the paths of virtue. We would fain believe, that those sweet innocents who are given to their parents for awhile, and who are then taken away just as they have begun to weave themselves about our hearts, are angels in disguise, sent to wean us from earthly things, and revive in our souls the longing for Paradise. God spiritualizes us, in this way, when all other means fail.

There are praying mothers, whose sons are far away, to whom this belief has sometimes come with peculiar beauty. Oh! what inexpressible joy to think that guardian angels attend the wanderer in the watches of the night, in the storm at sea, on the wide prairie, on the bleak sierra. Grown men, separated by vast oceans from their early homes, often feel as if some invisible presence was with them: a presence as though a celestial spirit, won by a mother's petitions, constantly protected their footsteps. There is a German legend which says that each of us, at birth, has a guardian angel appointed, who remains with us until death, unless driven away by our remorseless wickedness. Alas! for those who have banished their invisible attendant. What a dissolution theirs must be, as they go out into the dark eternity to come, lonely wanderers whom no messenger from Paradise takes by the hand!

To believe in guardian angels lifts the soul

heavenward. No one can hold this beautiful faith, yet remain wholly "of the earth earthy." To believe in guardian angels, ever on the watch, is proof of spirituality of thought, of aspirations after better things, of a yearning to be partakers, even here, of the confidence and sympathy of the blessed. Those who entertain it may sometimes be guilty of trespasses, but can never wholly yield themselves to sensual thoughts or deeds. It is a perennial spring of virtue in their hearts, purifying them by ever-recurring baptisms of holiness. To feel that we are con-

tinually in the presence of guardian angels, whether the "loved and lost" or otherwise, is to restrain us from evil, and urge us ever to a life of immortal bliss, beyond the sepulchre. With the conviction of such a companionship, he must be degraded indeed, who can stoop to vicious courses, or consort with the vulgar, the low, or the brutish. Such a belief is a "fence round about" the soul, protecting it from even the thought of iniquity. Thanks be to God for guardian angels!

ROSE HARRISON.

BY A. L. OTIS

For three days had that incessant rain been dropping outside, and for three days had those laughing voices been ringing merrily, "spite of wind and weather." Battledore, graces, backgammon, chess and other games had been voted first charming, then tiresome, and now the whole party stood round a bagatelle board with interested faces. It was a party worth describing. He whose turn it is to throw is Henry Sumner, short, fair haired, but by no means wanting in dignity; that other, Walter Wheaton, tall, black eyed, and merry as May-day. This one is William Stuart, a lazy, witty student—indeed all are Cambridge students.

The young ladies are Margaret and Lucy Sumner, Henry's sisters, and Rose Harrison. Margaret is a tall, queenly girl; Lucy, most confiding and affectionate, and Rose a sweet, interesting enigma. She is bold and bashful—naturally graceful, but wofully awkward when embarrassed; tender-hearted, yet sometimes pitiless. No one knows how to understand her, yet she is all openness. Rose has but one consistent trait—truthfulness.

These young people are boarding with a lady about five miles from Boston, in a large old family mansion. The three girls are under the protection of Rose's aunt, one of those charming old maids, whose genial hearts warm all those who have the happiness to surround them.

They are all young, no one over twenty. Rose is sixteen. They have been all summer, for it is now autumn—upon the most comfortable, home-like terms. At least they were so until a waggish cousin paid Henry a visit. More of him hereafter. This pleasant freedom had been soon established; for a short time after they became inmates of the house, an easterly storm set in, and for a week they were obliged to find all their amusement indoors and in each other's society. Each soon found out the one most congenial, and thereafter William and Margaret were constant companions, and were the first to become so. Then Lucy and Walter. Of course Henry and Rose were left without choice. The attentions of each gentleman were more particularly given to his chosen friend, and the days passed sociably, and without restraint, till the aforesaid cousin arrived. He insinuated, and

teased, and seemed so knowing, that the young folks grew uncomfortable, and the sweet, free, friendly intercourse, was in a fair way to give place to constraint and formality, when the mischievous-maker departed.

The evening after this happy event, as they were sitting around the table, ceremoniously trying to entertain one another, and having a stiff, uninteresting time, Rose suddenly spoke, her face glowing, her hands used vigorously and expressively in gesticulation.

"Ah," said she, "our pleasant, brotherly intercourse is at an end! You gentlemen are so afraid of being thought lovers, that you take refuge in these tiresome civilities. And we are afraid to mend your gloves, or read, or sing, for the same reason. Oh, don't let us feel so! Don't let Horace's idle jokes have such weight. I am sure if I must be formal and polite, instead of sisterly, I shall be so unhappy I cannot stay here."

All felt a little foolish, but they saw the necessity of a return to the former ease.

"Now," added Rose, "let us all vow we won't fall in love, or speak a word of love all summer, and then we shall have a sociable, happy time."

Her speech was received with hearty laughter, but she was too much in earnest to notice it, and continued,

"And now we all know that Mr. Stuart and Margaret are most congenial, Mr. Wheaton and Lucy, Mr. Sumner and——"

"Myself," would have been spoken as naturally as the rest, if she had not seen the roguishly expectant faces of all her companions except Henry, whose deep flush and earnest gaze checked the word. She paused, blushed, but continued earnestly,

"Yes, we will resume our sisterly conduct, so let us shake hands with our chosen brothers, and never be ashamed to treat them kindly and affectionately."

The other couples shook hands heartily, and with real open pleasure. But when Henry held his hand to Rose, she glanced at his face, gave her hand timidly, and blushed far more than any.

Now her enthusiasm had expended itself, and for the rest of the evening she was the most silent one of the company.

After this the sisters were confiding and confidingly affectionate, and no attention was too troublesome to be offered to them. The brothers took brotherly care of them, and were not slow to give brotherly advice, to insist upon thick shoes, and shawls in the evening. Henry especially watched over Rose.

"Here, Miss Rose, the dew is falling. I have brought your shawl. Let me see your shoes. Good. The air is fresh. Let me tie your handkerchief over your head."

The curly head was always laughingly submitted to him; he was implicitly obeyed invariably. She would sometimes jump into the small boat, and push herself far into the pond, balancing herself with the freest and most exquisite grace, while her clear laugh rang like a mermaid's, as she shook her head in defiance of her alarmed aunt's commands to return. But a beckon from Henry's hand would bring her like a flash to the shore. In riding or walking her daring spirit, that leaped to meet danger, was subdued, and happy under the control of his prudence.

Was she as careful of him as he of her? Far from it. No one's gloves were so often unmended, no one's headache so seldom asked after. She alone never praised his beautiful singing. Why did the usually grateful, tender-hearted Rose seem so careless?

The two matrons looked on complacently, for they saw the innocence and happiness of the young people. They did not care if lasting attachments were formed, for the parents of all were old friends. Both ladies were quiet and lonely, without the slightest turn for matchmaking.

A favorite amusement was rowing on the pond. One afternoon all were enjoying this pleasure, and they were too happy to return home. But weary of rowing and of sitting still, they got out on the opposite shore, ordered a light supper at the farm-house, walked in the beautiful, autumn-tinted shore, skipped stones, sang, sitting under the elms, and when the moon rose, entered the boat for home. Henry had been very silent as he sat by Rose. At last he gave up his oars, said he had a bad headache, and had better not exert himself. Rose, seeing him shiver, laughingly threw her shawl over him, but what was her surprise to feel a few minutes after, his head rest heavily on her shoulder in sleep, while its burning heat penetrated her dress. She almost held her breath. Her tenderest woman's feelings were touched, and as he thus leaned upon her in suffering, she felt that her whole heart was longing to comfort him, to cling to him,

almost to adore him. And thus she knew she loved him. It would have been a relief to weep, yet she sat still as a stone. Not for worlds would she have awaked the sleeper.

Having made the discovery of her own love, Rose trembled lest it should be apparent to others. She had all the will, but not the power, to be a hypocrite. Just before they reached the shore Henry roused himself, and becoming aware of his position, whispered a petition for pardon, which obtained no reply. He helped Rose to land, and accompanied the ladies to the house, leaving the care of the boat to the other gentlemen. As they walked across the fields, Margaret turned to Henry and said,

"You are ill, brother. Your hand is burning. Let me see your face in the moonlight. Oh, how flushed!"

Lucy came to him too, and though he declared nothing was the matter but chilliness and a little headache, they felt alarmed. Lucy kissed him again and again, as they waited on the lawn for the others. And how did his adopted sister, his little protegee Rose behave? She looked carelessly past him, saying she thought his efforts to be entertaining on the way home must have fatigued him. Her tone of assumed indifference sounded harsh. Brothers and sisters looked at one another surprised. Rose ran on to tell her aunt they had arrived safely, and they heard her singing as she went, rather more loudly than usual, too.

"What is the matter with Rose, Henry?" asked Lucy. "You must have offended her. I always find her so sympathizing."

"Can't you guess?" said Margaret. "She has been the first to break the law she made herself, and she tries to hide her delinquency."

"No, not the first to break it, Margaret, if she has broken it," answered Henry.

"What! two culprits? But though we had no power to enforce the first clause, we can the second. Beware, Henry, how you ever breathe a word of soft nonsense. We will have none of it."

"I give you my word, sister, you shall never hear a syllable of it."

"Nor will Rose, Henry. She has too much respect for her own law. Oh, I pity you two poor tongue-tied lovers. Will you resort to billet-doux, or learn the deaf-mute language?"

"Dear Margaret, don't tease," Lucy interposed, "for Rose will for consistency sake, refuse to listen, and I am sure, law or no law, he could not get the shy little thing to reply."

Henry was too ill to leave his room the next day, and his sisters were constantly with him.

Rose had therefore no companions. She sang and laughed. When told by her aunt that she might disturb Henry, she went to the woods to sing without restraint, she said; and came back with eyes dimmed by tears. She refused to ride with William and Walter. "She was too tired." Then she must bring her work and they would read to her. The work was brought, but the very first piece of poetry, some of Longfellow's beautiful hymn-like verses, sent her weeping to her room.

Three weeks of severe illness left Henry very weak, but better. As for Rose, her spirits and her bloom were gone. One day Margaret came to her with a message from Henry. He thought his adopted sister need not be banished so rigorously, and he should be so glad to see her.

Of course she could not refuse such a request, and taking her aunt's hand in her own little cold one, she entered his room. She was pale and quiet. Her voice was steady, but not natural. She saw how much Henry had suffered, yet no expression of sympathy passed her lips, nothing but the most ceremonious inquiries. If she had said one kind word, all her self-possession would have vanished. Henry was much pained, yet he resolved to have patience, and to hope still that Margaret was right. When she rose to go, he held out his hand to her. The effort to be calm was too great to be sustained much longer. Her hand trembled in his, and her lips quivered as she drew hastily away, and ran up-stairs. Her aunt, who did not see the beam of joy that lit up Henry's anxious face, scolded her well for her unfeeling conduct.

Her words made a vivid impression upon Rose. She spent the night in bitter self-reproach, and in the morning came down stairs almost as ill as Henry. She had made a resolution which cost her a severe struggle, and one she feared she had not the calmness to carry out. It was to beg her aunt to go with her to his room, when he

was alone, that she might ask him to forgive her coldness; tell him she would not wound him for the world, and thank him for all his kindness to her. She hoped to do all this as a sister would.

Henry was now left alone during the meals of the family. Rose had seldom gone down to tea lately. She heard all go down, and then with a beating heart and holding fast her aunt's arm, she went to his door, which was partly open.

Henry lay on the sofa with his eyes closed, and his hands clasped above his head. He did not open his eyes as Rose entered, and as she looked at him her courage ebbed fast. He was not asleep, and wondering at the silence and quick breathing of the person who entered, he looked languidly around. Then the sunlight seemed to stream from his face. He held out his hand, drew Rose gently to him, and bent her cheek to his, saying with playful emotion, "Ah, dearest Rose, I *must* tell you I love you. I shall die a victim to your law if I don't. I have obeyed it so long only because it was yours. Pray repeal it."

Her heart filled with happiness, but her sobs, as kneeling beside him, she buried her face in the pillow, were none the less violent. He lifted her head presently, for he could not bear to hear her cry so, and said, "Rose, will you not tell me, can you not say that you love me too?"

"Aunt, may I?" she said, imploringly.

"Oh, certainly, my dear," cried the astonished maiden lady, who little expected such a scene.

She did not tell him she loved him, but she kissed his hand, and as he caught her blushing face in both hands, and saw how thin and wan it had grown during his illness, it was his turn to have moist eyes.

The aunt retreated precipitously, and so will we, for Rose's awkwardness till she was accustomed to raillery upon the broken law was indescribable, and so also was her happy grace as a wife.

THE EDITOR IN HIS SANCTUM; OR, ANOTHER VISIT FROM JEREMY SHORT, ESQ.

WASHING DAYS, MANNERS PAST AND PRESENT, WOMEN IN SOCIETY, CONVERSATION,
 WOMAN'S MENTAL CULTIVATION, THE IDEAL WOMAN, HOUSEHOLD
 DRUDGES, PHYSICAL EDUCATION OF THE SEX, MARRIAGE.

JEREMY SHORT.—The days of the miracles are not over. I'll maintain this, sir, against "all comers," as brave knights used to say in the days of chivalry.

EDITOR.—You seem excited, Jeremy. What's the matter?

JEREMY.—Matter, sir! Just this. I made a morning call at the house of an acquaintance, yesterday, and being an old friend, and an old man also, went straight to the kitchen when I found the parlor empty, and especially as I heard the voices of the two youngest (beautiful and accomplished girls they are) chatting as merrily as blackbirds in a thicket. What do you think I saw? I saw them washing, sir—actually over the suds. Never knew them to look so charmingly in my life, either. I've met them in the festive throng, attired richly, gems shining on brow, bosom and arms; the light of triumph flashing from their bright eyes; the sparkling repartee breaking from their ruby lips; and all their motions poetry and grace—but yesterday! ye patrons of washing-day—blue Monday! they seemed sweeter and fairer and handsomer than ever! With glossy curls loosely tucked back, and cheeks all glowing with rich double roses, skirts short enough to show the pretty feet, and white arms covered with flaky foam—commend me to "beauty in the suds." Beside that, there were no extra manoeuvres—no throwing things into corners, and above all—no apologies. "You find us at work," said the youngest, laughing. "We are familiar with the kitchen," added the other, more gravely. "Aye! and with the parlor, too," said I, admiringly; and I placed them higher upon the record-book of my heart than ever. Shouldn't you have done so too?

EDITOR.—To be sure. But, Jeremy, how eloquent you are to-day! Now, if you like poetry, here's a piece I wish you to read. You do. Well, it's on "A Washing Day," and by one of our contributors.

JEREMY.—I'll read it, with all my heart.
(Jeremy reads in a sonorous voice.)

What ails the women?

What ails the men?

What ails the old rooster?

What ails the hen?

The chickens fly,
 And the children cry,
 The old wives scold,
 And the husbands sigh,
 And "rock a by baby" the sister sings,
 "If I was a dove and had silver wings,
 Up the church steeple and far away
 I'd fly at the dawn of a washing day."

(Jeremy becomes excited as he reads.)

For never a minute
 Of peace I get;
 The "Sancho" is in it—
 The floor is wet;
 For soap and suds,
 And scalding and choking,
 And dirty duds,
 And fuming and smoking,
 And puff and spatter,
 And wring and souse
 And such a clatter
 All over the house.
 What ails the women?
 What ails the men?
 What ails the old rooster?
 What ails the hen?

(Jeremy, becoming still more excited, snatches his cane, with which he gesticulates as he reads.)

The hen is scratching,
 Forgotten, forlorn;
 The rooster is watching
 In vain for corn;
 The men are all mad,
 For the women say,
 "A picked up dinner
 Or none, to-day."

"La! I'm tired," the old dame cries,
 Wiping the soap-suds out of her eyes;
 "Mercy upon us!" the daughter sings,
 "If I was a dove and had silver wings
 Up the church steeple and far away
 I'd fly at the dawn of a washing day."

EDITOR.—Bravo! Bravo!

JEREMY.—When I was a youngster, the girls would sit up all Sunday night courting, and go to the wash-tub the instant their lovers left. Times have changed, and not for the better. True, the girls don't court all night, now-a-days, but neither do they go to the wash-tub.

EDITOR.—Except in rare instances, as with

your paragons. But surely, you don't mean to say that the public manners have not improved. How would we tolerate old-fashioned weddings?

JEREMY.—I'll admit there's more decorum in these times. Yet I don't know, either. It seems to me less indelicate or vulgar to struggle for the bride's garter than to have a bridal chamber ostentatiously decked out at hotels or on board steamers. Then the young folks are quite too fond of showing their fondness for each other. The way some people behave in the honeymoon is disgusting. Nor are lovers entirely exempt. What business has a gentleman to be hanging around a lady all the evening, even if he is engaged to her? Or what business has she to allow such behaviour? In my time such conduct would have been considered abominable. Beside, it's an insult to the rest of the company, for it as much as tells them, "see how happy we are, don't you wish it was you?" I've no patience with such people.

EDITOR.—The best thing ever written on that subject, Jeremy, was the song of Rodger, the Scotch poet. You remember it, don't you? "Behave Yourself Before Folk."

JEREMY.—I recollect it but dimly. Have you it here?

EDITOR.—I think I can quote it from memory. (*Editor recites aloud.*)

"Behave yoursel' before folk,
Behave yoursel' before folk
And dinna be sae rude to me,
As kiss me sae before folk.

It wadna gi'e me meikle pain,
Gin we were seen and heard by nano,
To tak' a kiss, or grant you ane;
But, guideake! no before folk.
Behave yoursel' before folk,
Behave yoursel' before folk;
Whate'er ye do when out o' view,
Be cautious aye before folk.

Consider, lad, how folks will crack,
And what a great affair they'll mak'
O' naething but a simple smack
That's gi'en or ta'en before folk.
Behave yoursel' before folk,
Behave yoursel' before folk;
Nor gi'e the tongue o' auld or young
Occasion to come o'er folk.

It's no through hatred o' a kiss
That I sae plainly tell you this;
But, losh! I tak' it sair amiss
To be sae teased before folk.
Behave yoursel' before folk,
Behave yoursel' before folk;
When we're our lane you may take ane.
But fient a ane before folk.

I'm sure wi' you I've been as free
As any modest lass should be;
But yet it doesna do to see
Sic freedom used before folk.

Behave youresel' before folk,
Behave youresel' before folk;
I'll ne'er submit again to it—
So mind you that—before folk.

Ye tell me that my face is fair;
It may be sae, I dinna care;
But ne'er again gar't blush sae sair
As ye hae done before folk.
Behave youresel' before folk,
Behave youresel' before folk;
Nor heat my cheeks wi' your mad freaks
But aye be dounce before folk.

Ye tell me that my lips are sweet;
Sic tales I doubt are a' deceit;
At ony rate it's hardly meet
To press their sweets before folk.
Behave youresel' before folk,
Behave youresel' before folk;
Gin that's the case there's time and place
But surely no before folk.

But gin you really do insist
That I should suffer to be kiss'd,
Gae get a license frae the priest,
And mak' me yours before folk.
Behave youresel' before folk,
Behave youresel' before folk;
And when we're ane baith flesh and bane,
Ye may tak' ten before folk."

JEREMY.—Capital! All except that last stanza. I don't believe in married people billing and cooing before company. It's only a shade less rude than the other. I'm a man that speaks my mind, too.

EDITOR.—It's a pity that what is called "society" could not be reformed in other particulars also. A fashionable party now-a-days, is the most absurd affair in the world. The married gentlemen collect in a corner, where they discuss politics or business, leaving their wives to gossip about their children, the last fashion, and how this and that one "is looking to-night." A few matrons join in the dance, but generally this amusement is left to the young girls, who have usually lads for partners, with high shirt collars and very deep cuffs to their coats.

JEREMY.—Mere chits of boys! "Young America," socially, smacks dreadfully of bread and butter. Yet that society is no better is the fault of adults, and principally, for I am frank, of our own sex. When men are too lazy or too stupid to talk to women, how can you expect an evening party to be anything else but what it is! Gentlemen, instead of going to eat terrapins, oysters and boned turkey, or to discuss politics and trade, should devote themselves to the ladies, and revive the brilliant colloquial days of the old French *salons*. It's an insult to the fair to act as if they were incapable of anything but small talk.

EDITOR.—Right, Jeremy, right.

JEREMY.—In the times of Madame de Sevigne,

Madame de Longueville, Madame de Sable, and other dazzling female minds of the seventeenth century, women talked of everything—poetry, philosophy, social science, even politics; were, therefore, intellectual companions to men; and by their graceful language and quick wit, threw a charm over whatever they discussed, and offered a new insight into it. It's absurd to say that women can't talk of serious matters. Sir, if they were countenanced in it, they'd make splendid conversational companions. A woman of sense hates infinitely to be addressed in "small talk," for it's tacitly saying she's only a pretty fool, after all. Nay, their own brilliancy would react on man, making his colloquial style more epigrammatic. We'll never have again either the *salons*, or society in its larger sense, *what it ought to be*, until we restore woman to her place, as the adviser, confidant and friend of man. The best wife is she who is treated as a rational creature by her husband, and not as a mere toy: and what is true of wives, is true of women in the abstract. I don't wonder at the "Woman's Rights" movement: it's an exaggeration, I know; but it arises from the natural rebellion of woman against the slavishness to which she is condemned by modern fashion.

EDITOR.—I am glad to hear you talk so.

JEREMY.—Look at Shakspeare, sir! It is by their loftier attributes that his female characters please us. I've often noticed, in reading his best plays, that he rarely calls his sweetest creations beautiful. We are not enchanted by the face or form, but by the mental or moral attributes. Can you remember how Portia looked, whether she was tall, or short, a blonde or a brunette? I cannot. It is the forgiving love of Desdemona: the sweet modesty of Imogene: the wit of Beatrice: and the *naivete* of Perdita that charms us. Hermione, Cordelia, Helen, Bianca; or that sweetest creation of the sweetest poet's fancy, the gentle, beautiful Rosalind, are they not all enchantresses only because they have the hearts' intellects and sympathies of women?

EDITOR.—Though you would have woman cultivated, you don't believe in making her *mannish*. As Tennyson says:—

Woman is not undevelop't man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain."

JEREMY.—Yes, sir! Shakspeare never draws his heroines unwomanly in the sense of being one-sided, that is with the intellect, or anything else, developed at the expense of the heart. The grace that subdues us, the witchery that

enchants us, and the airy beauty that melts us into admiration, in his gallery of females, are all made up of the softer and sweeter points of woman's character. From the simple-hearted Miranda to the magnificent Portia, there is the same feminine beauty in all they say or do. They charm us by what is not common with ourselves. They are not seraphs, nor angels, nor prodigies, but tender, endearing, confiding women, and in that lies the secret of their witchery. Shakspeare knew human nature deeply, and he has given his heroines those qualities which God and nature give them; which are the sweetest and most winning in creation; and with which, in any clime, or age, or society, woman can steal into the heart. I often hear it said that such women exist no longer. I grant that this is true, if we speak of the sex generally. Woman, in this boasted nineteenth century, either sacrifices her mental or moral graces at the altar of fashion, or on the other hand at the shrine of some morbid intellectual or social monstrosity. We have Lydia Languishes and Mrs. Jellabys in abundance; but alas! few Portias, Rosalinds or Imogens.

EDITOR.—Yet we have some, and more than you allow. Such women do live, Jeremy, even in this utilitarian age; splendid in society; making their homes earthly Paradises; realizing all that Wordsworth has written.

"I saw her on a nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too,
Her household motions light and free,
And step of virgin liberty,
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet,
A creature not too bright nor good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles."

JEREMY.—Yet many an honest fellow's happiness has been spoiled for life, by his wife being too indolent or too finical to attend properly to domestic affairs. I know a lady who says she "can't condescend" to such things. Now, to my old-fashioned notions, matrimony is a partnership, in which the man's duty is to attend to business, and the wife's to order the household. Things would come to a pretty pass, if the husband was to say he couldn't "condescend" to work.

EDITOR.—Still, Jeremy, a woman ought not to be a household drudge.

JEREMY.—No, sir. But a poor man's wife must accept her destiny, and scrub, wash and iron, for her husband drives a team, pushes the plane, or hires himself out by the day. A great merchant doesn't personally pack his bales or

boxes, or load his ships, but he oversees it, directly or indirectly: and so his wife, though not called on to make the fires, should *understand* housekeeping and *superintend* it. American women would be all the healthier if they would work more. I don't wonder nervous diseases are so common, especially among those in comfortable circumstances. What with the hot, ill-ventilated rooms, caused by the fashionable system of heating houses; the neglect of regular exercise; the avoidance of the fresh, bracing, out-of-door air; and often the want of some occupation to interest them, as when there are no children, or the woman is unmarried, the miracle is that nervous disorders are not more prevalent. But women are not alone to blame. Fathers, brothers, and especially husbands, are often as much in fault as the sex. There are men, as you know, who think work is vulgar, forgetting that beauty cannot last without health, that health can never be enjoyed without exercise, and that there is nothing affords such proper and regular exercise as some bit of household work in which the lady is interested. If I had daughters, they should, every day, do a certain amount of work; walk in the fresh air; and ride on horseback if possible, for riding in a luxurious carriage is but parodying exercise. The English women owe their splendid beauty to their habit of daily exercise, of which part is taken in the open air. But here, weeks often pass without a lady going out at all, unless in her closed carriage; and the consequence is sallow complexions, low spirits, sus-

ceptibility to cold, weakness in the chest, and finally consumption and death.

EDITOR.—There's another thing, Jeremy, which should be corrected. Mothers, too often, and especially in fashionable circles, practically teach their daughters that the sole object of a woman's life is to get married. Now marriage is, doubtless, the sphere in which woman, as well as man, is happiest: but daughters should be brought up to be true women; and if they are, they'll soon be appreciated. Ah! my friend, when the world is reformed; when marriages of convenience cease; and when there are none but "marriages of true souls," as Shakspeare says, then will come the time of which Tennyson speaks.

JEREMY.—Yes! and which you began to quote. Let me finish it. (*Jeremy recites with deep feeling.*)

—
 "Woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse: could we make her as the man,
 Sweet love were slain, whose dearest bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference:
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
 The man be more of woman, she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling throws that throw the world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care;
 More as the double-natured poet each;
 Till at the last she set herself to man
 Like perfect music unto noble words;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To Be,
 Self-reverent each, and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other, even as those who love.
 Then comes the stately Eden chase to men:
 Then reign the world's great brides, chaste and calm:
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
 MAY THESE THINGS BE!"

MY OLD BACHELOR.

BY LILLIE M——.

HE was a hard man, that Jehiel Sparmer—a man who reminded one of those troublesome rivers on the map that have turnings and twistings innumerable, with little branches here and there that quite baffle one to trace their progress. But I was determined to conquer; I laid Jehiel out into chapters, and perused him attentively; when, just as I had mastered this study of animated Nature, he most ungratefully transformed himself into a plural noun.

But that good-for-nothing Fanny was at the bottom of it all. You must know that Fanny and I went to school together, and were very great friends. She had her faults, to be sure, but then who is *perfect*? I always *did* think that Fanny was very vain of those long, light curls of hers; and I would beg her to put them up, and arrange her hair like mine, (which, by the way, I never *could* make curl) but she only shook them around provokingly, and my proposition was not even “respectfully declined.”

Still, we had vowed eternal friendship—had promised to live to and for each other—and never, under any consideration whatever, to admit any creature into the firm. At some future period of our lives, we intended to retire to a rose-wreathed cottage, romantically removed from the busy haunts of men, and there pour out our souls in sweet communion together; but I think we both rather rejoiced that no definite time had been named for entering into this arrangement.

We often talked of it, though, as something delightful to look forward to; and felt really angry at the imaginary lovers who would besiege us to change this resolution. *We* marry, indeed! Resign the joys of friendship for some exacting husband! The very thought was profanation.

But one thing gave me considerable uneasiness. Fanny was often called down into the parlor to see a brother of hers; and some of the girls, who had caught a glimpse of him, pronounced him perfectly fascinating. He came every few days; but Fanny, who had promised to introduce me, delayed so long that I knew not how to account for it. “She would do it by and by,” she said, “there was no necessity for hurrying the matter—beside, as men were objects of indifference to me, why should I care?” To think, *now*, that I

actually blushed, when she said this, and felt quite ashamed to look at her!

I made an excuse, one day, when he was there, to go into the parlor for a piece of music; and I lingered long enough to cast a side-glance at Fanny’s brother. He was very unlike *her*; tall, with black hair and eyes, and a love of a moustache; and, better than all, he was an *officer*.

I began to think that “one of the name was *better* than the same,” and to wish that the name of *Mr.* instead of *Miss* Walters, could be inserted in that cottage arrangement.

They both looked very red in the face, when I entered; and Fanny seemed so astonished at my appearance that she quite forgot to introduce me. “She is afraid,” thought I, “of losing me—and no wonder, poor thing! that she should feel jealous of such a brother as *that*.” To quiet my conscience, I resolved that my first good deed, on becoming Mrs. Walters, should be to look out a nice match for Fanny.

The next day, Fanny went home; and, before long, I read the announcement of her marriage, and heard that she had run away with a poor young officer, very much to her parents’ displeasure.

This was *friendship*. Oh! how angry I felt that she should have given me the slip in this way! Perhaps they were both laughing at our imaginary cottage, and pitying me for being left in the lurch! I burned Fanny’s hair, and broke a china cup that she had given me for a keepsake, and then sat down to meditate a revenge that would be worthy of me and overwhelming to her.

I walked to the mirror. Yes, I was a great deal prettier than Fanny, in spite of her curls and lackadaisical air; my eyes were very bright, and I had a dimple on each cheek, and teeth that were entire strangers to the inside of any dentist’s establishment. I would marry, too; but it should be to lounge in a carriage, and ride fairly over the head of Mrs. half-pay officer, Fanny. I would put up my glass and survey her with a well-bred stare, and then ask languidly who she was. Oh! it would be capital!

Boarding-school became distasteful to me. There was no field, *there*, for the display of my charms and acquirements; and I pined to go

forth to the battle. Vacation came; and aunt Jeannette, who was always taking little jaunts in search of health, which she never found, because it was very much like the old lady's spectacles that were securely perched on her own nose, carried me with her to Boston.

I had never been the inmate of a boarding-house before; but I had my own visions of one, and very pleasant visions they were. I considered it a sort of hotbed for young gentlemen, who would have nothing to do but to make themselves agreeable; and I was extremely disappointed at the scarcity of these desirable articles.

Aunt Jeannette *would* go to a very quiet house, where there was scarcely any other boarders; and the only man visible about the premises was a stiff individual, who called me "*madam*," and groaned to aunt Jeannette about dyspepsia and rheumatism.

Soon after we were established there, an old crony of aunt Jeannette's arrived—a maiden lady, of uncertain age, but with one of the pleasantest countenances I have ever seen. Miss Bedwick was very neat and very plain, and extremely moderate and careful in her manner of speaking. She kissed me, on being introduced, and assumed a patronizing care over me in all things.

Before long, it transpired that the stiff-looking individual was the possessor of several hundred thousand dollars—that he was good-hearted and generous—and supposed to be looking out for a wife. Instantly, I formed the laudable intention of becoming Mrs. Jehiel Sparmer.

I went up to Miss Bedwick's room, and told her all about Fanny; and I sat rocking in a low chair, and talked a great deal of nonsense about Mr. Sparmer and my own intentions—to all of which Miss Bedwick listened with a placid smile, as she went on folding her clothes just so in her drawers.

"I was young and pretty," she said, "and it did very well for me to talk so." I felt sorry that Miss Bedwick was not "young and pretty;" but she was certainly a very nice person, and made a capital foil. I should lose no opportunity of showing Mr. Sparmer the contrast between us; and, as I was the only young lady there, success seemed almost certain.

That very day, I called Mr. Sparmer "Sir," and asked him some questions about Boston, and handed him the paper; and, at last, I actually made him smile; and it seemed to come into his head, for the first time, to take a look at me—for he was one of those provoking men who never appear to see anything.

Miss Bedwick was introduced, but as she only

talked to him of remedies for the rheumatism, I was very well satisfied to sit and smile, and lift up my eyes at Mr. Sparmer and cast them down again.

"I have tried red flannel," observed Mr. Sparmer, in answer to some advice of Miss Bedwick's, "very much the color of this young lady's cheeks."

He meant it for a compliment, of course, and that was quite encouraging—still, I had rather have had him think my cheeks like roses than like red flannel.

Miss Bedwick smiled, and asked me when I was going back to school; but I replied quite contemptuously that I was not going back at all.

The next morning, Mr. Sparmer offered to show me something of Boston; and I arranged my hair in broad braids under my pink bonnet, as I determined to render this *tete-a-tete* walk an eventful one for my bachelor escort.

I was not quite pleased, on descending to the hall, to find Miss Bedwick bonneted and shawled, and evidently expecting to accompany us. Old bachelors are so stupid. But as aunt Jeannette could not go, he had probably invited the spinster-lady on my account.

I was rather provoked to have Miss Bedwick's prosy talk listened to so attentively, but he probably did this from respect for her advanced years; and, as I took a survey of her no-colored silk dress, and unbecoming bonnet, I became quite serene.

I found myself conducted safely back again to the protection of aunt Jeannette with a very confused idea of the different objects that had been pointed out as worthy of notice. I arrayed myself, with much satisfaction, in a white dress, and descended to the parlor—having had considerable trouble to shake off aunt Jeannette, who almost insisted upon my drawing on a pair of long, flannel sleeves, "to keep my arms from feeling cold."

Mr. Sparmer declared that "I looked as fresh and fair as a spring flower;" and I rattled away to him all the evening upon almost every imaginable subject. Miss Bedwick sat talking to aunt Jeannette; and looked so perfectly satisfied with the arrangement of things that she was evidently indifferent to everything in the shape of a beau as that deceitful Fanny had professed to be. Mr. Sparmer actually laughed several times; and informed me, with a pinch of the arm, that "some of the young fellows would be running away with me one of these days."

"Mr. Sparmer has taken a great fancy to you," said Miss Bedwick, the next morning, "he paid

you a variety of pretty compliments, which I am afraid to repeat."

I was very curious to know what he *had* said, but Miss Bedwick would not satisfy me in the least—"she was afraid," she said, "of making me vain."

After this, I considered the old bachelor my own peculiar property, and Miss Bedwick had evidently arrived at the same conclusion; for she remained considerably in the background, or talked to Mr. Sparmer about wonderful remedies for his numerous complaints. But he was more *amused* by my conversation, and sought it so often that I was every day expecting something more decided.

I had just passed Mr. Sparmer on the stairs, and replied to some very flattering observations, when an open paper fluttered to the ground. He was an absent-minded man, and, unconscious of his loss, he continued his progress; while I went down and picked up the paper.

There was writing on one side; and, having glanced at a most flourishing "madam" at the top of the page, I concluded that he had, at length, accomplished a written proposal, and I was only anticipating his wishes by reading it then. But, as I proceeded, I became puzzled; and then consternation and anger succeeded my first feeling of triumph. It ran thus:

"MADAM—Impelled by an admiration of your sterling virtues, I have, after mature reflection, concluded to address you in a straightforward manner, and offer you the title of wife. Your sobriety and good plain sense suit my taste exactly—and your admirable nursing will, I have no doubt, prove highly beneficial.

"I consider the arrangement which I propose a suitable one in *every* respect; you have left behind you the flightiness of youth, and have gained experience from long intercourse with the world. I shall be pleased to hear from you soon—in order that I may settle the matter at once, or turn my attention elsewhere."

The distressed old object! to prefer a thistle to a rose! And that still *more* distressed Mrs. Bedwick! For all her seeming indifference, she had paraded her "sterling virtues" to some purpose. Oh! the wickedness and deceitfulness of the world in general!

But this was not all; they must yet add insult to injury. As I was passing through the hall, that evening, Mr. Sparmer accosted me, with his fiance on his arm; and, with an impressive manner, as became a man about to enter into double-blessedness, he observed:

"Madam, your agreeable conversation, has rendered your society so desirable to both of us," Miss Bedwick here made an abortive attempt to get up a blush, "that it is our wish to receive a visit from you, as soon as we are settled."

Miss Bedwick had actually the assurance to reiterate these sentiments; concluding with observing to her better-half that was to be:

"I told her that you had taken a great fancy to her, but she would not believe it."

I broke away abruptly, and asked aunt Jeanette when she intended packing up. She was surprised at my sudden desire to leave; but the next morning saw us in the cars, homeward bound.

I drew my green veil over my face, thought of Fanny, and cried.

THE DIAMOND EAR-RINGS.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

A MORE beautiful girl than Florence Finley in her eighteenth year it would be difficult to imagine. Her fine figure, tall and graceful, gave her a noble aspect, and her face was lovely to look upon, with its perfect features, and rich coloring. The bright tint of her glowing cheeks contrasted charmingly with the dark fringe which shaded her clear blue eyes—with the white pearly teeth, and with the rich brown of her luxurious braided hair, which crowned her graceful head with a glorious coronet of nature's bestowing.

Though full of life, and almost wild with the exuberance of her yet untamed spirits, she yet possessed an innate dignity, and a kind of regal bearing, which made one think how nobly she would have filled the station, had fortune made her a queen. One could not but imagine how the loyalty and devotion of a nation would have been called forth by a being so bright and beautiful, and how, in stirring times, she could have awayed all hearts, at will, by the magic of her grace and spirit.

But far from regal was the sphere in which this queenly creature was placed by fortune. Though of a good family, a series of misfortunes had placed her parents in very narrow circumstances, just as Florence was growing up to womanhood. Then came the painful struggle to keep up appearances—to maintain a footing in society, which is one of the most unhappy results arising from poverty.

The daily shifts—the petty privations—the vexatious restraints which straitened circumstances ever entail, especially upon those who associate with those more affluent, were keenly felt by our young and sensitive heroine.

She was at this time just entering society under the guardianship of her aunt, Mrs. Eldon, a woman of wealth and fashion. Her mother had resigned her own duty as chaperon, for the double reason, that her failing health rendered the duties of society irksome to her, and from an economical motive which I will explain.

Quite unable in their reduced circumstances to provide a new and suitable evening outfit for her daughter, Mrs. Finley considered that only by adapting to that end, the remnant of her own once elegant wardrobe, could the deficiency be supplied.

There had been great consultations with mantua-makers, great turning, and cutting, and refitting, and retrimmings, before our heroine's simple and limited outfit was complete. Very deficient was it at best, and Florence unfortunately did not know that with youth and such beauty as hers she needed no other adornment.

True, she could not but see that she was greatly admired and courted; but she felt that she did not meet her companions quite on equal terms, and the fact mortified her, as only a very young person could be mortified, by such a circumstance.

Florence's constant companion was her cousin, Helena Eldon, a lively, thoughtless girl about a year older than herself, and though incapable of the mean feeling of envy, our heroine was often compelled to contrast her own simple toilet with her cousin's rich and tasteful attire.

It chanced that toward the end of Florence's first winter, Mrs. Eldon made her daughter a present of a very elegant set of jewels. These ornaments she was to wear, for the first time, on the occasion of a very splendid ball, to be given by Mrs. B——, which it was supposed would be the last large entertainment of the season.

On the morning of the important day, Helena carried her necklace to the jeweler's to have some slight change made in its mode of fastening. Florence accompanied her. She was just at that age when girls have a perfect passion for jewelry, and her eye eagerly scanned the brilliant treasures displayed on every side. The salesman seeing her delight in his wares, called her attention to a pair of very beautiful diamond ear-rings, which he took from a case, and desired her to try on. Florence full of girlish delight flew to a mirror which stood near, and having thrown aside her hat, clasped the glittering jewels in her ears.

Even she herself was startled and delighted with the brilliant effect they lent to her bright and glowing beauty. A blush mantled her cheek as she acknowledged her own loveliness, and felt a wish rising in her heart that *one* could see her as she was looking then.

But though there cannot be a doubt but that a true novel-hero would have done his indisputable duty, by appearing at this most evidently

appropriate moment, real life lovers are not always so well-trained, and do not take their cue so readily; and in this case it chanced the young gentleman who had been honored by Florence's wish was several miles away, engaged in some prosaic occupation not at all to the point.

Perhaps I should have mentioned sooner young D'Ebreuil, a gentleman of French parentage, who alone, of all Florence's admirers, had succeeded in touching her fancy, if not her heart. Others might cause her eyes to sparkle, and her cheek to blush by their flattering homage, but he only had power to make her heart beat as he approached, or cause it to thrill when he spoke.

Florence yet stood musing before the mirror, when her cousin, who had been occupied till then, came up to her and uttered an exclamation of surprise and admiration.

Florence started, and then laughing joyously in innocent exultation at her own beauty, whispered to her cousin,

"Oh, Helena, how I should like to wear these for only this one night!"

"Should you?" said Helena, in good-natured sympathy, "well, let me see if it cannot be managed." She paused a moment, and then whispered, "Leave it to me, and you will see what a nice plan I have formed." She then turned to the salesman, and desired him when he sent her necklace home that afternoon, to also send the ear-rings for her mother to see, intimating she might perhaps become the purchaser.

When they left the store, the unscrupulous Helena remarked,

"Of course you understand my project, coz?"

Florence professed ignorance.

"Why you little goose, do you not see—I shall take care to receive the jewels myself this afternoon. Mamma will not be at home, so I shall desire that the ear-rings be left till to-morrow. In the meantime, you, my little princess, shall wear them this evening, and neither you, nor I, nor the jeweler, nor the ear-rings be a bit the worse for it."

"But cousin," began Florence, quite startled. Helena interrupted her gaily,

"But me no buts, Flory dear; let me manage it all for you, and you will see no harm will come of it. I always was a famous manager, and have thought of everything. Mamma, you know, is not to accompany us to-night on account of her headache, and old Mrs. M——, who is to matronize us, will never even see the ear-rings, she is so blind. A pair of diamond ear-rings will not be worn out by once wearing; they can

be sent back early to-morrow morning, and no harm done to any one; so cousin mine be convinced, and consent to look your loveliest to-night."

Florence was *not* convinced. She was not in the least imposed on by her good-natured cousin's reasoning. She was perfectly conscious that the action she contemplated was highly improper and wrong. But she was strongly tempted; tempted both by her childish and foolish, but ardent desire to wear the ornaments, and the wish to look her best in the eyes of him she most desired to please. Enough, she yielded to temptation, and consented to wear the ear-rings.

Everything occurred as Helena had conjectured; she received the jewels herself from the hands of the jeweler's boy, and when she and her cousin were safe in the dressing-room at Mrs. B——'s, (where the ball was given) she clasped the glittering jewels in Florence's delicate little ears, and exulted in her "splendid management."

Florence was dressed very becomingly in a white silk made (I must be candid) of her mother's wedding dress. Her beautiful hair without ornament, was wound round her small head, which seemed almost *too* heavily laden with its burden of rich braids. Her neck and arms were bare—nothing relieved the extreme simplicity of her toilet but a bouquet, which Helena had presented to her, and the superb ear-rings, which, rather out of keeping with the rest of her dress, glittered in her ears.

Still they added an inconceivable brilliancy to her appearance. Excitement had lent a brighter bloom than common to her soft cheek; her clear eyes were more than usually lustrous, and altogether she had never looked so superbly beautiful.

Ere long she was joyously taking her part in the dance, forgetful of her ornaments, and unconscious of the remarks, both admiring and ill-natured, which they elicited.

She was wholly occupied in enjoying the gay scene, and in wondering if Mr. D'Ebreuil were never coming. What magnetism was it by which she knew the exact moment when he at length entered the room? She had not even glanced toward the door, but a sudden flush on her cheek, and an increased animation of manner were not unobserved by her partner, though he little guessed the cause. She knew, too, though she did not turn her head, that he had come and placed himself near her—that he was watching her. She suddenly became very gay—very gracious to her partner, who, greatly flattered, redoubled his assiduities.

Toward the close of the quadrille, Florence ventured to steal a timid glance at Mr. D'Ebreuil, his look denoted everything she wished—admiration—jealousy—love. Her eyes sunk beneath his, and an exulting smile she could not repress stole about her mouth. Perhaps it was a feminine artifice to conceal the meaning of that involuntary smile which made her look up again, and bow and smile to Mr. D'Ebreuil.

Another moment brought him to her side. His looks, his voice, his manner all indicated the most intense inward excitement. It was plain that the strong citadel of his heart, which had so long held out, had surrendered, and at discretion.

Florence was very happy, and her joy spoke in every feature of her face, and seemed to irradiate her whole being. At parting Mr. D'Ebreuil detained her hand a moment in his, and whispered with peculiar emphasis,

"I shall see you to-morrow."

The morrow came—but how different a one from what poor Florence had anticipated.

In her joyous excitement the night before, she had forgotten to remove the jewels from her ears on leaving Mrs. B——'s. On her arrival at home, she found to her consternation that one of them was gone; lost, whether in the ball-room, in the carriage, or in the street she knew not, but it was gone.

She passed a sleepless night, and early next morning hastened to her cousin to tell her of her mishap. Helena had the carriage searched, and sent inquiries to Mrs. B——'s without success.

Our heroine returned home in deep distress, and seeking her parents, made to them, with many tears, a full confession of her fault and its consequences.

Mr. and Mrs. Finley were overwhelmed. The value of the lost jewels was such as to preclude the idea of their paying for them without absolute ruin—but worse even than this, was it to feel their confidence in their beloved child shaken.

While this troubled consultation was pending, Mr. D'Ebreuil was announced. He desired to see Mr. Finley.

Florence's heart beat fast, and the blood mounted to her brow as she laid her hand on her father's arm as he was leaving the room, and said with a great effort,

"Father, tell him of what has just occurred—if—if it should prove to be his right to know."

While her father was absent from the room Florence lay on her mother's bosom, weeping as though her heart were breaking, and whispering to herself, "It is all over—it is all over!" She rose and stood erect as her father returned.

She did not ask a question, but her face, ashy pale, and her eyes fixed inquiringly on him, spoke for her.

Mr. Finley put his arm round her, and replied gently, "Yes, my child, he came to make proposals for you—but—I did as you desired, and he has withdrawn them."

Florence's head sunk heavily on her father's shoulder. He perceived that she was fainting, and carried her to the sofa.

In a few moments, however, she revived under her mother's care, and sat up.

"Has he gone?" she asked, when she had recovered her recollection.

"No, my dear," answered her father, "he desired to speak with you. But I will go and tell him you are not well enough."

"No, no," cried Florence, "I shall be better in a moment; I will see him."

She rose, and bathed her eyes and aching head; smoothed her disordered hair, and went down stairs.

She was very pale when she entered the room, but at the sight of her lover one single feeling overpowered her—shame—burning shame, to feel how she had lowered and disgraced herself in his eyes. She sank upon a sofa, covering her face with her hands.

In spite of the stern coldness in which Mr. D'Ebreuil had wrapped himself, he felt himself yielding too much to the softening influence the sight of Florence's deep distress and humiliation excited. He took a turn across the room to re-fortify his principles, and then paused opposite to her, said,

"Pardon me, Miss Finley, I have given you the pain of this interview in the hope of being useful to you." After a pause, he continued in some embarrassment, "your father has informed me of this—unfortunate affair. It would be a pleasure—a consolation to me to render you such aid as lies in my power. I apprehend your father's circumstances would render it inconvenient for him to repair this loss. Fortunately my means are such as to make the requisite sum a trifle to me—make me forever grateful by allowing me to assume this debt as my own."

"Never, sir, never!" cried Florence, raising her bowed head with a look of pride, and even resentment. "Do you think I have no feeling of delicacy—propriety—left?"

"Far from it," said Mr. D'Ebreuil, "but I beg of you to view this matter calmly and dispassionately, and I think you will accept my offer."

Florence made a gesture of impatient dissent. Mr. D'Ebreuil continued,

"Your father, as you know, is unable to meet this demand——"

"He would make any sacrifice for me," said Florence, bursting into tears—"sell the furniture—anything."

"Would it be right to allow this?" asked D'Ebreuil. "Consider that your father is already struggling with difficulties—he is growing old, and your mother's health is delicate—would it be right to involve them in privations—perhaps sufferings, for your fault; would it not be more just for you to sacrifice your pride, as an atonement—a punishment, if you will, for your error? For myself," he added, after a pause, "believe me, I wish only to be your friend in this matter—your *disinterested* friend."

Florence noted and understood the emphasis placed on the word "*disinterested*"—but even while she suffered from the stern pride, which scorned contact with even the shadow of dishonor; it but exalted the more in her estimation him who would not deign to fix his love unworthily. She even trembled when she saw his eye rest pityingly upon her, lest he *should* relent—had he done so, he would have fallen immeasurably in her opinion—so strange a thing is woman's heart.

After a long silence, during which a severe struggle was going on in Florence's breast, she turned to Mr. D'Ebreuil and said frankly,

"Mr. D'Ebreuil, I thank you for your offer, and accept it; not as a gift, but a loan, which I shall make it my duty religiously to discharge. Let it be merely a matter of business between us. The rest you will arrange with my father."

She was gone, leaving D'Ebreuil in a state of mind which he himself was far from understanding.

Of a highly sensitive and chivalric nature, the very idea of anything dishonorable shocked and revolted him. He was of that disposition that he would have torn his own heart out had he found in it a base thought. He was ill prepared then to brook the discovery that the being he had enshrined as some goddess in his inmost heart, was but a foolish girl, guilty of vanity and imprudence at least, if not dishonor. His confidence in her purity, her integrity, was shaken. In the first shock and revulsion of feeling he sternly resolved to abjure her—to cast her utterly from his heart.

But to a man of true feeling even the ashes of a dead passion are sacred. The woman he has once loved can never be to him as another. He must respect her—defer to her—serve her for the sake of what has been.

These were D'Ebreuil's thoughts till Florence

appeared. Yet when he saw her, every feeling was moved by her beauty, her distress—her deep humiliation. Something within him whispered, "She is a true and noble woman, notwithstanding the fault she has committed—she loves you—pardon her, and take her to your heart"—but the impulse was resisted—whether for good or evil the reader will see.

Mr. Finley having been prevailed upon by Florence's entreaties to accept the proffered aid, everything was easily and quietly settled, the ear-rings were paid for, and the affair kept secret. The expense incurred was six hundred dollars.

A few days later, Florence, having obtained the reluctant consent of her parents, accepted the situation of governess in a family who resided in the South.

Henceforward commenced a new life for our heroine. Away from home and friends, surrounded by unloving strangers—confined to irksome duties—placed in a subordinate and dependant position, she found much to try and discourage her. But she carried within her the true spirit, and the trials she met did but perfect and exalt her character.

One idea, more than all others, sustained poor Florence. She fully believed that Mr. D'Ebreuil no longer entertained any feeling for her but that of contempt for a silly, unprincipled girl; but a noble ambition inspired her. With no hope of ever regaining it, she would be *worthy* of the love she had once inspired. Though she should never see Mr. D'Ebreuil again, never hear his name mentioned, she would make herself, and prove herself worthy to have been his wife. So only could she recover her self-respect.

At the end of a weary year, Florence found that she had laid by of her earnings the sum of three hundred dollars—half of the whole debt.

She determined, for fear of accidents, and to show the sincerity of her intentions, to forward this sum at once to her creditor. She did so in such formal business terms as she could devise. In due time she received a receipt as formal, and probably more correct than her epistle.

Its cold brevity chilled poor Florence's lonely heart—perhaps she had expected some few words of friendly encouragement and approbation. But this formal epistle proved to her that Mr. D'Ebreuil had ceased to take any interest in her, even as an acquaintance.

She went about her duties with a face a shade paler—eyes a little more languid; but excepting this, there was no change, except that she was more gentle and patient than before.

A few days afterward, as Florence was sitting

toward sunset, looking from her window upon the western sky, a servant came to inform her that a gentleman desired to see her in the parlor. The last letters from home had informed her that she might expect a visit from her father; she flew down stairs in impetuous haste to meet him, and found herself face to face with D'Ebreuil.

Greatly discomposed and agitated by the unexpected meeting, Florence struggled hard to preserve at least the semblance of composure, but was ill able to undergo the ordeal of the scrutinizing glances with which D'Ebreuil was regarding her.

She strove to free her hands from his detaining grasp, that she might turn away her tell-tale face.

"I thought you were my father," said Florence, feeling that *something* must be said.

The strange remark remained unanswered—perhaps unheard, for D'Ebreuil began to speak of other things. His tongue seemed gifted with a strange eloquence, as he spoke of love deep and earnest, which had stood the test—the trial of waiting in patience till the beloved one had been able to do herself the justice of proving her nobleness and worth. He told her how he had longed on their last interview to clasp her to his heart and comfort her; but had restrained his feelings, in the conviction that the time would come when he would woo and win her, not as an erring child to be forgiven, but as a woman, purified and ennobled, to whom his reverent homage would be due.

Florence listened to words which fell sweeter than music on her ear, with every pulse thrilling with love and joy. Yet when D'Ebreuil urged her to return home at once, preparatory to their speedy union, he met with an unexpected difficulty.

Florence, with an obstinate adherence to matter-of-fact, persisted that the debt was but half cancelled; that she had set her heart on discharging it *in toto*—that nothing could, or should divert her from a resolve so firmly taken.

In vain her lover besought her to be reasonable—to consider that all he had would soon be her own—and assured her she had fully and amply asserted her honor; Florence clung to her fancy, partly from a perversity innate in woman—partly because she feared her penance was incomplete—partly, perhaps, to enjoy the luxury of making her lover feel her power.

Three interminable months passed away; and what D'Ebreuil's persuasions could not achieve, the wearisome details of daily duties, now grown doubly irksome, had accomplished. How could our poor heroine attend to recitations—add up sums, and feel a proper interest in the children's answers when she asked them in French or German "whether they had their books or hats?" while she was thinking all the time about her last letter, or wondering when the next would come?

When therefore a new, and most eloquent and indignant appeal against her absurd and cruel resolution afforded her an opportunity of retracting with honor, she deemed it best to yield with a good grace.

Her joyful reunion with her family was but the prelude to another parting. Fortunately, however, she was not called upon to follow her husband to a distance; but residing near her beloved parents, and happy in the love and respect of him to whom her whole heart was given, Florence lived to prove, both as wife and mother, the nobleness and purity of her character, notwithstanding the youthful folly to which she was tempted by a pair of brilliant ear-rings.

THE REPENTED SIN.

BY CLARA MORETON.

CHAPTER I.

THE widow Clair was alone in the world. First, her husband, then child after child had she seen go down into the grave, until bereft of the last one, she was left alone.

Bereft of the last one, but not by death! She had given birth to seven sons—four had been lost to her, in their youth, but the others she had reared from infancy to manhood; and then one by one had she closed the pallid eyelids, imprinted the last kiss upon the rigid lips, and stood by, until their forms were encoffined and borne forever from her dwelling. She had heard the clogs rattling above their breasts, and the sound had entered her heart like arrows; but now, all these memories were overwhelmed by the deeper grief that had come upon her.

Who could have looked upon her sunken eyes, her blanched locks—once black as the raven's wing, her thin lips, compressed so tightly—her pale face, where not only Time, but sorrow, had hourly graven still deeper lines, but might have known how bitter to her, had been the cup of life! how thickly scattered were its dregs throughout the field of memory!

Who could have heard her voice, so chastened in its tone, so tremulous at times, as though the heart laid hold of it, and freighted it with sorrow, so earnest and so grave, but would have found their own words faltering on their lips, in unmeditated sympathy for one so stricken?

Who that could have seen her, when alone, within the funereal darkness of her dwelling, and marked her restless, troubled manner—how, where'er the wind blew wild, tossing the drifted snow against the creaking shutters, and eddying down the chimney, with its wierd sounds, she would pace to and fro the floor, and wring her hands and sob so piteously:—who that could have seen her then, but would have divined that with other memories than those of the dead, was that once proud and stately form battling?

One night—one dark, cold, sleety night, when the storm which had commenced at twilight momentarily increased in violence, when the wind came in gusts shaking every casement of the dwelling, and the rain beat fast and thick upon the roof, and against the windows—that night she sat quietly in her high-backed chair,

with its morocco cushions, seemingly heedless of the furious storm that raged without. Upon her dark mourning garments the firelight fell—it flashed full upon the folded hands which rested on her lap—it glanced up upon her pale countenance, revealing there a look of hope and of resignation, more than for long months she had known before.

The old house-clock struck the hour of ten.

"I will not expect her too much to-night, for in this storm it seems hardly possible that she could come. Poor child! poor child! it will be but a sad welcome that the heart she has broken can give her;" and so saying, she shook her head slowly, while the large tears which had gathered in her eyes rolled down her face.

The rumbling of a carriage over the road now fell upon her ears.

She started from her chair, and stood upright—her clasped hands pressed tightly over her fast throbbing heart.

With parted lips, from which all color had flown, and with eyes strained wildly, she stood motionless. The carriage drew nearer—it paused beside her dwelling—she heard no more.

When consciousness returned, she found herself upon her bed in her own room, but at the foot the curtains were parted, and there in the dim light of the night lamp, her eyes rested upon a face which attenuated and changed as it was, she failed not to recognize.

She stretched out her arms.

"Edith, my daughter, come nearer to me!"

"Oh, mother! my mother! I am unworthy," and the frail girl bowed low her head, and resting it against her mother's feet sobbed like a child. The physician who had been instrumental in returning the wanderer to her home, and who had been waiting for this moment, now arose, and taking Edith's hand in his, led her to her mother.

There was a long embrace. Once more, heart beat against heart; and in that hour, Edith felt that from her sin, her shame, and her degradation, she had found a refuge in a mother's unfailing love.

"Thou wilt never leave me again, Edith; we will live for each other, and strive so to live that we may inherit a home in mansions where neither

sin nor sorrow ever enters," said Mrs. Clair, as she released her daughter from her arms.

Edith would have answered—she would have poured forth her gratitude to the mother who could so forget her errors—the mother she had forsaken, herself in turn to be forsaken by the one for whom she had lost all that a woman could lose, but the words were stifled by her convulsive sobs.

Three months from that night, over the same couch, the mother bent. Edith was dead. In great suffering had her sin been expiated.

She lived to hear the feeble, wailing cry of a newly born babe, to breathe the prayer that her sin might not be visited upon her child, and then her sad eyes closed forever.

CHAPTER II.

THE little one bore its mother's name—Edith Clair. To no other did it seem entitled; but as month after month passed away, the lone widow watched in vain for some resemblance in the features of the child to its erring mother.

The babe's eyes were of a sunny blue, while its mother's had been of a lustrous hazel. The little rings of hair which fell around its plump and dimpled face, were of a light gold, which time might deepen into auburn, but never could they match the dark chestnut waves, whose profusion had so enhanced the frail mother's charms.

As Edith grew up to girlhood, Mrs. Clair's smiles became more frequent and less sad, and her manner less frigid and stately; for the affectionate child, with her cheerful obedience, her devoted love and her winning ways, fully repaid her grandmother for her anxious watchings over her infancy.

When Edith was fifteen, for the first time within her memory, came real trouble to that little household. The bank in which Mrs. Clair's property was invested, failed, and the savings of years were swept away in a breath. Severely as the widow felt her loss, she did not sink beneath it; but rallying herself, exerted all her energies to find employment whereby they could support themselves without separating. She was successful, and the first years of toil passed away without their feeling acutely the gripping hand of poverty. But in the second year, Mrs. Clair's health failed. She had applied herself so closely to her needle, and from her sedentary life had contracted a disease of the heart, which, her physician had warned her, might at any moment prove fatal.

All day, and late into the night, week after week did Edith toil with her needle, but all in

vain. Her industry was insufficient to meet even their few wants.

Mrs. Clair was a proud woman. As long as her income had been secure, she had spared neither pains nor expense in Edith's education, now, her misfortunes seemed a trial greater than she could bear. Her constant anxiety of mind was fast wearing her life away. There were none to whom from ties of relationship she could feel herself excused for applying for assistance—none to whose watchful care she could commit Edith, when her hour should come, while deeper and deeper struck home the conviction that that hour was rapidly approaching. What days of agony were those! Again in memory she lived through that terrible period of her life, which had closed with her daughter's dying breath. Edith left friendless and unprotected! how should she escape the snares which are ever spread for such!

These thoughts at length drove her to a step, which once she deemed it impossible she could ever have taken.

It was a cold, cheerless morning in November. The leaden clouds, which drifted down low from the sky, threatened rain, but Mrs. Clair was not to be deterred from the errand she had undertaken.

She came down into the little sitting-room, attired in readiness for her long walk. Edith knew nothing of her intentions.

"Oh, grandma, do not go out," she urged, "and such a day as this. You know Dr. Milton said it was quite unsafe for you to go out into the street alone."

"Not more so than for you to be left in the world alone, Edith," was the unhesitating answer; and Mrs. Clair stooping, kissed her grand-daughter, and then hastily left the room.

On, through narrow streets, until she reached the market place; and now, the clouds which all the morning long had looked so threatening, deluged the streets with their contents. Still on, Mrs. Clair made her way through piles of boxes which blockaded the sidewalks, for it was the principal mercantile street of that city. At length she paused in front of a large four story edifice. A broad sign over the door, bore the names of the firm, "Small, Morris & Co." Her trembling hands turned the knob, and the door swung heavily inward. She made her way to a young clerk who stood writing at a desk.

"Can I see Mr. Ralston?" she said, in a low tone.

"Mr. Ralston! There's no such person here. You must be mistaken, my good woman," answered the clerk.

"Mr. Henry Ralston, I mean. Is he not still in the store?" persisted Mrs. Clair.

"No, madam, nor never was, to my knowledge."

Mrs. Clair looked around bewildered. An elderly gentleman in the back part of the store advanced and proffered her a chair. Pitying her agitation, he inquired particularly her errand. Mrs. Clair sank powerless into the chair, while the clerk mentioned the gentleman's name for whom she had inquired.

"Henry Ralston," repeated Mr. Small, for it was the senior partner of the firm who spoke, "she is right, he was once with us, but he fell into bad habits, and if I am not mistaken his father sent him to sea." Turning to Mrs. Clair, he added, "Mr. Morris has gone to dinner, madam. By going to his house you will be able to find out more than I can tell you. It strikes me that they have heard from him lately, but for a long time it was supposed that he was dead. Mr. Morris married Ralston's sister. Of course they will be able to give you some information of him. John, just write down the number of Mr. Morris' residence."

The clerk turned to his desk, and Mr. Small walked back into his counting-house.

"You seem anxious to see the gentleman," said the young man, as he handed her the folded direction.

"I am anxious—anxious to have justice done before I die."

"Mr. Morris is just the man for you, then. If it is money that his brother-in-law is owing you, you'll be sure to get it from him. He is very charitable—subscribed a hundred dollars only last week to the church of which he is a member; a fine, pious man Mr. Morris is. Good morning."

Again through the wet, dismal streets Mrs. Clair made her way. Over the muddy, slippery crossings, down past the Exchange, where, confused by the crowd of omnibusses, she almost lost her way. But at length she reached a quiet square, where the large mansions bespoke ease and opulence. To one of the finest of these the address directed her. As she stood upon the marble steps, and looked up to the lofty and polished windows, behind which hung heavy folds of satin and lace, she could not repress the thought that could Edith find such a home as this, with such a pious, charitable man as Mr. Morris was represented to be, for a protector and a friend, then indeed, might her death prove a blessing to her grandchild.

The bell was answered by a tidy, pleasant Irish maid, but Mrs. Clair's heart again sunk

within her, when she found that neither Mr. Morris nor his wife were at home. But the girl seeing her disappointed look, added, "if ye wouldn't mind coming in and waiting a bit, Mr. Morris will soon be in to his dinner, but we don't expect Mrs. Morris home for a week or more. She is gone into the country to her father's."

Mrs. Clair gladly accepted the offer, and giving her umbrella and dripping cloak into the maid's hands, she followed her through the wide hall, and entered the room which she threw open for her. It was a handsomely furnished sitting-room, and Mrs. Clair felt reassured as looking around amidst the appliances of wealth, she detected much to confirm her in the opinion of Mr. Morris' character which his young clerk had given. Upon a chair lay a fresh copy of the Christian Observer, and on a table in the centre of the room were handsomely bound copies of the Bible, "Bunyan," "Psalms and Hymns," and "Confession of Faith."

In a comfortable chair in front of the glowing grate, Mrs. Clair sat down, and indulged herself in a reverie, which from the placid smile that rested on her wasted features, could not have been other than a pleasant one. Poor woman! it was the first for many a long day.

"Yes, I will tell him all," she mused; "his heart will bleed for my sorrows; and he cannot help feeling an interest in my lone child, connected as she is, in the sight of God, by ties of blood to his wife—then he will come to see us, and who can look upon Edith without loving her? He will promise me that he will see after her when I am gone—yes, he will take her home with him, good man that he is—he will provide a home for the homeless one—she will want for nothing here. Perhaps he has no children of his own. Oh, it is God who has led me here! 'He will not see the righteous forsaken, nor their seed begging bread.'"

The hall door was opened—and shut. Her reverie was broken, and Mr. Morris stood before her. He was a younger man than Mrs. Clair had expected to see. His dark hair was but slightly threaded with silver, and it fell in careless profusion around a face which with its present expression would strike a stranger pleasantly. Mrs. Clair arose, spoke of a painful errand that had been long delayed, but which from the state of her health she dared no longer postpone. Mr. Morris begged her to be reseated, and drew a chair near her for himself.

Briefly, but touchingly she told her tale. There was nothing kept back. The bright color that flushed her withered face told how keenly she

felt her daughter's shame, but not once did she pause in her story until all was finished. Her eyes had been cast down, but now she raised them to meet the look of sympathy she expected.

She might as well have looked into a face of stone.

"Madam," he said, and his tones were soft and measured, but every word fell like a blow upon the heart whose wounds had been opened afresh, "madam, I am sorry to say that I can do nothing for you. Your own reason must teach you that you could not ask it of me. Had it been my own brother, under the circumstances I might have felt bound to have done something; but here, you see, there is no relation excepting the accidental one of love. My wife's brother is nothing to me—positively nothing—no more than you are. It seems a very sad affair throughout, and I do not see what is left for you to do, as your health is failing, but to apply to the guardians of the poor. Foolish prejudices a great many have against the alms-house; but for my part I should much prefer the comfortable quarters one finds there, to begging."

Mrs. Clair rose to her feet.

"I did not come, sir, to beg—I did not even come with the intention of troubling you with a history of my sorrows. God knows how I was led into it. Could you know us well, you would not wonder at what must appear to you at present but folly. I came only to know if you could tell me where to find *him*. You cannot deny, sir, that if *he* is living, he is in humanity bound to provide a home for his forsaken child."

"Again I am sorry to disappoint you. We have lately heard a rumor that he is living, but we do not put much credence in it. I will mention the case to my wife, and if you will leave your address, she may be able to collect something together in the way of clothing for you."

Mrs. Clair forgot herself. She cast an indignant glance upon Mr. Morris, and with a scornful, haughty air turned from the room. In the hall, the maid with much kindness of manner, restored her cloak and umbrella. The worn apparel could not deceive the girl. She knew that she was waiting upon one who had known better days.

"Poor thing!" she said, as the door closed upon Mrs. Clair, "poor thing! she looks as though she needed help sorely, and she couldn't come to a charitabler man nor Mr. Morris."

Alas! there are too many whose reputation for charity has been founded upon their *public* alms giving, as Mr. Morris' had been. Too many who contribute donation after donation to the flourishing societies of the day, turning a deaf

ear to a recital of the cases of actual want that come beneath their notice. Their contributions are heralded throughout the churches of which they are members, and a character for piety and charity built thereon, while fearful is the account which is heaping up for the great day against them. Then shall He answer them, saying, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

The dark clouds had drifted down to the horizon. The sky was as blue and sunny, and flecked with as white and fleecy clouds as after a storm in June. Mrs. Clair was weak and exhausted from excitement and want of food. She picked her way carefully through the miry streets, and at length reached in safety her humble home.

Edith was sewing by the window, anxiously awaiting her coming. She bounded to the door to meet her—she drew her into the warm room—unfastened her cloak and bonnet, and after fixing her comfortably in her arm-chair, she brought the cup of tea which she had prepared for her return.

All the while Mrs. Clair said nothing.

"You look sick and tired, grandma," said Edith.

Mrs. Clair did not answer.

Over the little round table Edith flung a snow white cloth, and continued her preparations for their frugal supper. Mrs. Clair broke off a crust of bread and ate it slowly.

Twilight came on, and still she sat there in a kind of stupor, while Edith began to grow alarmed. After vainly urging her grandmother to eat more she lighted the candle, and after putting away the things, drew her own low chair up to the fire-place.

An hour or more passed away in a silence unbroken save by Edith's knitting thread, the falling coals, and the clock ticking on the mantel.

"Edith, my child, bring the Bible and read aloud to me the thirty-seventh psalm."

As Edith finished the twenty-fifth verso, her grandmother interrupted her.

"Read that verse again, Edith."

She did so in her low, musical tones, and looked up as she finished.

"I have been young, and now am old," repeated Mrs. Clair, tremulously, "yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

She smoothed Edith's auburn curls fondly with her hand, she looked tenderly into the full blue eyes that were upturned to hers, and while from her own the tears fell fast, she said, "To the Lord alone will I look for help for thee, my child."

He will take care of thee, and into His hands I commit thee trustingly, now and forevermore."

She arose slowly from her seat, pressed her hand tightly over her heart, as Edith had often seen her do before—then sank back again with a convulsive gasp as if stifled for want of breath.

The unusual exertion and excitement of the day had been too much for her.

Edith alarmed, threw up the window and called for help. A passer by summoned a physician, who arrived in time to catch the agonized look which fell from the dying woman's eyes upon the sobbing girl beside her. Scarce a moment more and Edith was without worldly friend or protector.

Upon the same night Mr. Morris crossed the river, and drove to the residence of his wife's father, with the intention of bringing his family home with him in a few days.

During the evening he said laughingly to his father-in-law, "I heard of one of Harry's follies to-day, which will give him something to do with his money, if he has as much as rumor credits him with."

Mr. Ralston grumbled out some answer in his usual rough, disagreeable way, while his wife removed the spectacles from her eyes, and wiped away the tears which always gathered at the mention of the prodigal son, who for so many long years had been an alien from his father's house, and the land of his birth.

"What was it, Edward? tell us all about it," said his wife.

The story lost much of its pathos in the commonplace way which Mr. Morris narrated it, but still the sympathies of his wife and mother-in-law were at once enlisted.

"What was the woman's name? and where does she live?" said both, almost in the same breath.

"That I cannot tell you, for although I promised her some assistance, she took offence at something in my manner, I suppose, and walked off as proud as Lucifer without giving me her name or residence. She probably expected me to volunteer to take the girl off from her hands, but if I once began to provide for every one that might turn up with a claim upon him, there's no knowing at what number the list would stop."

"You are right," growled Mr. Ralston, "I am glad you don't know any more about her. If you did, she shouldn't have a cent of mine to help her; and as for Harry, if he had ever made the fortune we heard, he's as poor as a church mouse by this time. I'll bet my head of that; for he never could keep a cent. If it wasn't so, there's plenty to heir it without his illegitimate children

stepping in to cut it up into mouthfuls. Let them go to law and see what that will give them. Here, Edward, did I tell you that I had sued that rascally tenant of mine—Holton?"

Thus the conversation was changed, but by two at least, the circumstance that had given rise to it was not forgotten.

And now Mrs. Clair's humble home was of course broken up. A young widow who kept a small trimming store, proffered the shelter of her roof to the desolate Edith until some employment could be found for her. Gladly Edith availed herself of the kind offer, and strove to make herself useful about the house and in the store. Mrs. Dayton felt Edith to be no burden to her, but as she was unable to pay her any wages, she exerted herself to obtain some better situation for her. Edith, in folding away her grandmother's dresses, found in the pocket of the one she had last worn the scrap of folded paper bearing Mr. Morris' direction. Mrs. Dayton took it from her. It so happened that the firm of which she had purchased the coarser part of her stock of goods was that of Small, Morris & Co. As she had frequently heard of Mr. Morris' charities, she concluded that he had given Mrs. Clair his address, that she might call upon him when she needed assistance. To him she therefore immediately went to represent the friendless state of the orphan. Mr. Morris was annoyed by this second application, and spoke as plainly of the alms-house as a never-failing resource for the homeless to Mrs. Dayton as he had to Mrs. Clair. She was too much surprised to answer, but changed the subject of conversation by inquiring about some goods she had intended ordering. Mr. Morris intimated that if she was going to keep open house for beggars, he should prefer not to see her any more. Chagrined and mortified, Mrs. Dayton left the store. "Is this Christianity?" she thought, forgetful of the many whose lives cast a reproach upon the pure religion of the gospel.

She said nothing to Edith of her errand, for she did not wish to pain her with the knowledge, that by giving her shelter she had injured her own interests. No, although not professedly a Christian, the principles of Christianity were too deeply implanted in her heart to permit her to cause sorrow where it could be averted, or to refuse to share with the deserving child of want her scanty means.

Winter came on, and Edith, through Mrs. Dayton's customers, obtained all the sewing that she was able to do. She went out by the week, choosing now that she could pay her board, to return and pass the nights and Sabbaths with

the friend who had proven so kind to her. Other reasons there were why Edith was desirous of naving her evenings unmolested; but that was a little heart romance, with which at present we have nothing to do.

Recommended by one to another, Edith came at last to be employed by Mrs. Morris, but as she was known only by the name of "Miss Edda," the family would have had no suspicion of who she was, even had Mr. Morris communicated to them the information Mrs. Dayton had given him. But this he had not done. He thought it more polite to keep it to himself, particularly as the rumor of his brother-in-law's large fortune and speedy return had been fully confirmed.

Miss Edda became a great favorite in Mr. Morris' family. The little folks loved nothing better than to gather around her in the work-room, and there was at least one larger one who found a charm in her presence.

One morning Mr. Morris said to his wife, as he laid down the paper, "The Orient has been spoken, I see. Your brother will probably be with us in the course of twenty-four hours."

A glow of pleasure lighted up Mrs. Morris' delicate face.

"Poor Harry! I can hardly wait to see him."

"Poor Harry," echoed her husband, "he is anything but poor, if the half we hear be true. You must have the choicest kind of a dinner to-morrow, for no doubt he is accustomed to living like a nabob. Why is it that you apply the adjective 'poor' to him now, Anna?"

"Well, I don't know. Habit, I suppose. You know he was always in some scrape or other, and father was always scolding him, and I pitied him, for I knew he was good-hearted, and would come out right some day. Poor fellow! his heart was almost broken when he was sent off, but it has turned out for the best, it seems. I wonder if that woman's daughter could have been the one he fretted so about."

"I'm sure I don't know, nor don't care either, and I warrant he doesn't by this time. Harry was never very steady in his attachments. He is probably a confirmed bachelor, and it is for our interest to keep him so. You must leave nothing undone to make our house a comfortable home for him."

Mrs. Morris sighed. She was thinking of other days, when she had received different instructions.

It was a busy day that followed. Miss Edda was called upon to resign her plain sewing, and all hands united in putting the finishing touches on the chamber that was set apart for uncle

Harry's use. It was a comfortable-looking room, with its curtained windows and canopy bed, its inviting arm-chairs, and the glowing coals in the polished grate. Twilight came on as the last folds of the voluminous drapery of the bed were arranged to Mr. Morris' satisfaction, and they gathered around the fire, looking complacently upon the result of their labor.

"I wonder what kind of a looking man uncle Harry is," said little Mary.

"I can just imagine how he looks," answered her brother John, who was a few years older. "As dry as a paroled pea, I'll bet a crown—his skin all shrivelled and yellow, and his eyes as glassy as beads. That's the way all those people look who have lived in India. I've seen lots of 'em."

"I wish he wouldn't look that way," answered Mary, climbing up in Edda's lap as she spoke. "I wish he'd come back as beautiful as a prince, and marry you, so that you could stay always with us."

Mrs. Morris glanced up from the bed of coals upon which her eyes were fastened in her reverie. They rested on Edith, and for the first time, as the firelight played upon her features, did she recognize her wonderful resemblance to her brother. Like lightning flashed across her mind the tale her husband had repeated to her.

"Miss Edda, you have never told me your last name, nor have I thought to inquire before," said Mrs. Morris, with as much calmness as she could assume, while such fancies were in her brain.

"Clair—Edith Clair, mamma," answered Mary. "I asked her long ago. Isn't it a sweet name?—just as if it came out of a story book."

"Children, you had better run down and see if that was your papa who just came in."

Mary preferred staying where she was, and very reluctantly left the room with the others at her mother's second bidding.

"Have you always been obliged to support yourself, Miss Edda?"

"Oh, no, it is only since grandmother lost everything in the bank—nearly two years now, I believe," answered Edda, sighing as she spoke.

"What was your grandmother's name?"

"Rebecca Clair."

"Oh, your father's mother—was it?"

"No, my mother's."

"Then both must have had the same name—cousins, were they not?"

"I do not know. I never thought of that before. Grandmother never would talk about my father. I believe he did very badly, and mother grieved herself to death after him; but it was all when I was a baby, for I don't remember

either of them. I haven't a relation in the world now, that I know of."

Mrs. Morris clasped Edith's hand between her own. She did not dare to breathe a word respecting her surmises, but she felt their truth, and her heart gushed up in tenderness toward the child of her brother. The prejudices of the world, which at other times might have held an influence over her, were in that unselfish hour forgotten. She folded Edith to her breast, and mentally resolved that so far as lay in her power she would be a mother to her.

That night Mrs. Morris communicated to her husband Edith's history, and her own convictions concerning her. Mr. Morris' surprise at finding Edith Clair an inmate of his family equalled his vexation. Instead of recognizing the Providence that had thus made her one of his household, he affected to doubt his wife's suspicions, although Mrs. Dayton had communicated to him sufficient to convince him of their truth. So thoroughly provoked was he at his wife's freedom from selfishness, that he felt like turning the unconscious cause of his anger out of the house. Fearing a discovery, he commanded his wife not to breathe a word of such nonsense to her brother or to Edith, and he knew her too well to doubt that she would obey.

The next day, Mr. Henry Balston arrived. Neither his nephew's fancy sketch, nor his sister's recollections found their counterpart; and reluctantly the latter was obliged to acknowledge that she had but slender foundation for weaving her romantic tissue.

CHAPTER III.

MR. MORRIS, living in fear as he did, resolved that he would in some way get Edith out of the house. Fortune favored him. Frederic Morris finding her alone in the work-room one day, made good use of his time by telling her in impassioned and broken sentences how very dearly he loved her. Mr. Morris overheard the declaration, and without waiting to hear more, hastened down to the parlor, and sent one of the younger children up to tell Frederic that he wanted him. After sending him to the counting-house on some errand, he paid Edith a visit in her own quarters. She was surprised at seeing him there, but having no suspicion of the avowal being overheard, she was able to meet him without manifesting in her face much of the emotion that was busy at her heart. She was not suffered to maintain her composure long.

"How much does my wife owe you, Miss Clark?" said he.

"My month is up to-day, sir, and Mrs. Morris paid me this morning; but my name is Clair—not Clark, sir," answered Edith, a lovely smile resting on her beautiful mouth, and lighting up her soft, azure eyes.

"Clair or Clark, it's all one, or ought to be to a person who has no better right to a name than you have, Miss," replied Mr. Morris.

Edith looked up with a stare of amazement. Her refined and gentle nature did not for an instant divine the cruelty of this brutal speech.

"What do you mean, Mr. Morris?" she said, at length.

"What do I mean? I wonder at your boldness in asking me such a question. But it's all of a piece with the rest of your conduct: your artful ways have done you no good, let me tell you."

"Mr. Morris, I demand it as my right that you tell me what these insinuations mean," said Edith, her eyes fairly flashing, "my character is all that is left to me to lose—what have I done to forfeit your good opinion?"

"Your character! humph!" Mr. Morris spoke with a sneer, but seeing Edith turn so pale at his words, he added in a different tone, "that your character has no firmer basis to rest upon is not your fault, I suppose; but it is your fault that you have led on a boy like Frederic as you have done. For shame! Miss Clair! Don't interrupt me. I know more than you think I do, and if you don't wish for a public exposure you will never enter my doors again. You need not prepare for a scene, Miss Clair—a hundred of them could not move me; nor will I listen to any excuses, nor apologies, nor explanations. I shall never change an iota, and that you may know how impossible your union with my son would be, I will tell you that I would sooner marry him to Biddy, the house-maid, than to you. It is in no light manner that the world visits the mother's sin upon her illegitimate offspring."

Edith rose to her feet with such calm, pure dignity—with such a holy light beaming from her eyes, that Mr. Morris was held in awe for a moment, and obliged to listen where he had intended to have commanded silence.

"You have said enough, sir—enough to prevent me from ever entering your presence again. Your son will do me the justice to tell you that which I shall leave unsaid; and may God forgive you, Mr. Morris, for the cruel knowledge you have given me."

Edith left the house without one word of farewell to any of its inmates. Mr. Morris explained her absence by saying in the presence of the family, that having had reason to suspect her of some improper conduct, he went to her to expos-

tulate with her, when finding her so shame-faced and bold about the matter, he had ordered her to leave the house, and prohibited her from holding any intercourse with the members of his family.

Every one looked the surprise and dismay that they felt at this piece of information. Frederic colored up to the temples, but his brave young heart did not let shame prevent him from speaking.

"Father, I hope I have in no way been the cause of this unpleasant affair. I am quite willing to acknowledge before you all that I love Edna, for I am——"

"Frederic, I command you to be still. Boy as you are, what do you know of love? A sewing girl! and one of doubtful reputation at that. I congratulate you upon your choice."

The wily man had overshot his mark. Assailing Edith's character before his son, he had gone one step too far. Frederic's eyes flashed.

"Of what improper conduct do you accuse her? Who dares to say that her reputation is doubtful?" he questioned, eagerly.

"What right have you to demand this knowledge of me?" said his father, with an air of stern defiance.

"The right which every one who loves has to shelter and protect the object of that love," answered Frederic, fearlessly.

"Then I suppose we may consider you, sir, an acknowledged and accepted lover," said Mr. Morris, with a sneer.

Frederic hesitated for a moment, but the truth was strong within him, and mortifying as it was, he answered boldly, "No sir. I am an acknowledged and a *rejected* lover."

"Who is all this fuss about?" said uncle Harry.

"It's of no consequence—of no consequence at all," said Mr. Morris, hurriedly, "we will say no more about it at present."

But little Mary clambered up into her uncle's lap, and unobserved, whispered in his ear, "Edith Clair."

At that name the circle before him faded into air. He saw no more his sister, her husband and their children. One memory alone filled his thoughts—one form alone was presented to his vision. Edith Clair, with her young and beautiful face, her pure and trusting heart. Ah, oftentimes and bitterly had he repented that moment of wild excitement, when his unbridled passions had outraged that purity, and betrayed that trust, yet never with a keener pain did it come home to his heart than now. How worthless seemed his fortune to him, in comparison with the disinterested love that was lost to him forever.

True, he had but to speak the word and elegant mansions would be at his disposal; yet, he felt himself homeless, for all that gives to home its charm and grace was wanting. Nor might he ever hope to win such love again, as once had been his. Age was slowly but surely creeping upon him—his heart was soured by rude contact with the world, and suspicion's legion of sentinels guarded it from the near approach of affection. Homeless and childless! How keenly those words brought home to him the retribution of his sin. He knew that Edith Clair was dead—the Edith he had known. He had heard of it in his Indian home, from one to whom he had written for information; but he knew no more, for Edith's mother had guarded the secret well; burying in her own bosom her troubles and their source. As he leaned back in his chair the workings of his face plainly showed the agitation of his mind.

Mrs. Morris was convinced of the truth of her suspicions and her resolution was taken.

At the same hour in her simple little room at Mrs. Dayton's, Edith sat alone, very wretched in the new trouble that came upon her. Her burning cheeks, her throbbing temples, from which the rich auburn hair was pushed back, her wild eyes, were all proofs of the extent of feeling her disgrace had awakened.

Mrs. Dayton knocked at her door, but received no answer. Opening it, she looked in to see if she was there.

"Edith, Mr. Harold is down stairs waiting for you," she said.

"He need not wait," answered Edith, "I shall not go down."

"Why, what is the matter, child?" questioned Mrs. Dayton, surprised and startled at her appearance.

Edith flung herself on the bed, and buried her face in the pillows.

"I will never see Frank Harold any more," she sobbed, at length. "His parents have reason enough *now* to object to me."

"What is the matter, child? You must come down and see him, he will make it all right."

"I will not go down. I will never see him again. Tell him so. Tell him not to come here any more."

"I shall not carry any such message, Edith. If you have had any trouble with him, come down and talk it over. You love him too well to quarrel with him, you know you do."

"If I loved him fifty times as well I would not go near him now. I am in earnest, Anne Dayton: you must give him such a message that he will never come here, unless you want to drive

me from your roof. Tell him I don't love him—tell him anything—I don't care what you say to offend him, so that I never have to look in his eyes again."

Edith would neither listen to argument nor entreaty, nor would she confide her troubles to Mrs. Dayton, consequently the latter was obliged to put her own construction upon them. When she went down stairs, she told Mr. Harold that she thought Edith must have heard something that his parents had said respecting her, for that she positively refused seeing him again, and threatened to leave her roof if an interview was forced upon her. "I never dreamed the child had so much spirit," continued she, "she has always seemed such a gentle little creature."

"But I cannot think that my parents have interfered again," said Frank Harold; "there must be some other cause—I am sure of it. Won't you give me a piece of paper until I write a few lines to her?"

The paper was brought, and he wrote upon one side of it: "My dear Edith, you have no right to deny me the privilege of sharing every sorrow with you, after what has passed between us. It is my province to bear life's burdens for you—let me see you, and hear from your own dear lips what new trial you have. Do not refuse this my first request, or you will pain me unutterably. Your faithful Frank."

In a few minutes he received his answer.

"Your parents will soon hear of another obstacle to our union. I do not choose that you should again be brought to the brink of the grave, to wring from them another reluctant consent to the continuance of our interviews; beside I have to-day received an offer that may prove more advantageous. I am no longer your Edith."

A half an hour after these words were written, Edith would have recalled them, but it was too late.

Frank Harold had read them, and gone away without making another attempt to see her.

Edith feared that he would wear her out with his perseverance, and following the impulse of the moment she penned those words in hopes of awakening his pride. In cooler moments she despised herself for her artifice, for bitter was the thought that she had made herself appear unworthy of his respect.

"Why had I not courage to tell him the truth, and show him that I was firm in my resolution never to permit him to share my disgrace! How much easier would it be for me to bear my troubles now! Oh, how could I have done myself so much injustice!"

In such lamentations the night wore away.

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Morning came, the heavens all roseate with light—her song bird by the window pouring forth its sweetest trills—the busy hum of life going on in the street below, everything the same all around her, but in her heart how changed. Life seemed to her no longer desirable. She wished herself in the grave-yard beside the dead mother, who had left her such an inheritance of shame. She stood before the glass to arrange her hair, and started back at sight of the pale and haggard face, with its glassy eyes looking out upon her—a mockery, as it were, of her former self. How could one night have wrought so great a change?

Ah, it had been a night of exceeding mental torture. Mrs. Dayton, who soon after entered her room, felt that some terrible affliction must have fallen upon her young friend, but in vain she endeavored to win Edith's confidence. Her answers were so out of character with her former self—she seemed so sullen and unapproachable, that Mrs. Dayton was at a loss what course to pursue toward her. At length she resolved to go to the place where Edith had last been sewing, and ascertain what had sent her so suddenly home in the middle of the day. She well knew whose house she should be obliged to enter, and she dreaded an interview with a man whom she now so thoroughly despised as she did Mr. Morris. She had never told Edith the result of her application to him on her behalf, as she had never questioned her, and long ago Edith had forgotten the name that was found in her grandmother's pocket, for all events in those hours of grief made but slight impression upon her. But while Mrs. Dayton was preparing for her visit, she was surprised by a call from Mrs. Morris' brother. Mr. Ralston was not much over forty years of age, and as the climate of India had in many respects spared him, he was still a fine-looking man. This morning there was such a depth of sadness in his clear, blue eyes, that Mrs. Dayton at once felt attracted toward him, and gave him the minutest particulars of the information he came in search of.

He did not leave the house until he had humbled himself before his child, and with tears supplicated the forgiveness which death denied that he should receive at the hands of the mother. Edith's bruised heart was too much in need of a refuge to turn aside from a father's love.

From that hour she dated a new existence. Her heart overflowed with gratitude for the devoted fondness of her new-found parent, and she resolved to dedicate her life to him. With such a support as his love to cling to, she felt fully able to bear the odium which the stain of

her birth cast upon her; but she never wavered in her determination to not suffer another to share that reproach with her.

Her father seemed to have renewed his youth, in the unanticipated happiness that had come upon him; and yet there were moments when pangs, keener than any he had heretofore known, troubled his bosom. It was, whenever suddenly entering his daughter's apartment, he would find her in tears, and although she ever met him with a smile, his own heart told him that she had abundant cause for shame and sorrow.

He had provided Edith and himself with suites of rooms at one of the most fashionable hotels, but they lived in the strictest privacy and seclusion. Mr. Morris, outrageous as he was at the discovery his brother-in-law made, considered it politic to dissolve the ban he had placed upon the intimacy of Edith with his family. An union between her and his son no longer seemed so undesirable. But Frederic soon learned to be fully satisfied with the cousinly love that Edith not unwillingly gave him. The alluring face of a new acquaintance had something to do with his resignation, and Edith found to her relief that he was still too young and too susceptible to form any stable attachment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Harolds lived on Blank Square, in one of the most elegant residences in the city. Edith had been a schoolmate of Lucy Harold's, and Frank's attachment dated as far back as his schoolboy days. Before either of the girls were old enough to feel the difference in their social position, the mischief was done; nor was Frank, who was by several years the eldest, sufficiently worldly and selfish in his views to be prepared for the opposition which he met, when upon the death of Mrs. Clair, he announced to his parents his intention of marrying Edith. His love only increased in violence by their persecution, yet they in no way relented until a nervous fever prostrated him so low that they feared for his life. Then, stipulating that he should not marry for two years, they gave their consent to the continuance of his visits, devoutly hoping that some of the attractions which in the meantime they should take particular pains to throw in his way, would win him from his allegiance. Matters were in this condition, when Edith's note came like a thunderbolt to Frank, stunning him with the doubts and suspicions which an unbiassed judgment would have enabled him to combat.

There were hours when his own heart told him that it could not be that she had written in sin-

cerity—that it must have been from some whim of which her own gentle nature would soon make her ashamed: but in vain he waited for a refutation. The days wore away, and no tidings came to him of Edith.

His parents rejoiced too much at the discontinuance of his visits to be particular in questioning the cause; but they gleaned enough to comprehend that Frank considered himself aggrieved, and that he had been disappointed in his estimate of Edith's character. They naturally concluded that she had preferred some wealthier suitor, at which they were, of course, more pleased than piqued.

Although they lived in considerable style, they were not wealthy. Mr. Harold was not estimated to be worth as yet a realized fortune, and he was therefore partly dependant upon his practice as a lawyer, to support the style in which they lived. It was the ardent desire of both parents that their children should marry well. Lucy had been sent to boarding-school to remain until she had passed through the earlier part of those perilous teens, during which season young persons are so apt to let their hearts run away with their heads; as, who should know so well as Mrs. Harold, who would have fancied "that scapegrace Ralston," as her mother called him, had it not been said mother's most determined partiality for Arthur Harold and his inheritance—an inheritance which came near being squandered in the wild days of his youth.

Mrs. Harold had lived to give thanks that she had not thrown herself away upon her first choice; and seeing how much happier her lot had been for submitting to the guidance of her parents, she was anxious that her children should be made happy in the same way. Master Frank early showed a disposition to choose for himself, in more things than affairs matrimonial, but the gentle and quiet sister had more amiability, and seemed fair to realize all her mamma's wishes.

Mr. Harold came in from his office one evening in fine spirits.

"I met an old friend to-day, Anne, whom I have not seen for I don't know how many years; an old lover of yours, too—now, guess who it is," he said.

Mrs. Harold surmised in a moment who it might be, and she answered immediately.

"I should not be surprised if it were Harry Ralston, whom we all buried years ago, for I heard the other day that he had come back from the Indies, and was as rich as Cræsus."

"You are right—it is he. Now, would you believe it possible that he has returned a bachelor?"

"Indeed! why, I heard he had purchased the old Brighton Mansion, and was going to have it torn down, and rebuild upon its site. What does he want of a house if he has no wife to put in it?"

"But he has a niece, or ward, or something of the sort, who is to keep house for him. By the way, what a capital opportunity for Frank. Ralston told me that she was the loveliest little creature in the universe. He has settled everything upon her, he says."

"Poh! ten to one he'll marry her himself," answered Mrs. Harold, with a most emphatic toss of her head.

"No, not a bit of it. If you were to hear him talk you would know it was no love affair. He has grown quite patriarchal and fatherly, I assure you. But you will have an opportunity of judging for yourself, for he is coming around this evening."

"Well, I am sure I do not know of any one whom I should be more pleased to see," and Mrs. Harold glanced at the mirror opposite, adjusting her blonde cap as she spoke. "Has he changed much?"

"Perhaps not more than you or I," answered Mr. Harold, "yet, you will find few traces of the wild Harry Ralston you used to know. He looks to me like a man subdued by some great sorrow."

Mrs. Harold thought of his young days, and wondered if it were possible that—but no, we will not betray Mrs. Harold's meditations for the next half hour. At the end of that time, Mr. Ralston was announced, and in the matter-of-fact way in which their acquaintance was renewed, she found that any youthful predilection which he might have had for her, had been long since forgotten, or remembered only to speak jestingly of. But she noted the change which had attracted even her husband's less observant eyes. There was a frequent gloom in his manner, a sadness in his tone, which excited her curiosity, and led her at length to make an attempt to gather something of his history during the years of his absence.

"How strange that you should never have fancied any of those attractive creatures that one reads about in novels, where East India life is brought in—some of those interesting officer's widows, for instance," she said.

"Such a thing might have been possible," answered Mr. Ralston, "had I left this country a year sooner, but during that period of my life events occurred which rendered it impossible."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Harold, rousing from the brown study in which he seemed to have

been indulging, while his wife and friend were chatting of the past. "What! you don't mean to say that you ever found out that—that is, you never had any trouble from that frolic of ours at the falls; but of course you had not, or you would have been sure to have come to me with it."

Mr. Ralston looked up inquiringly.

"What frolic?" he asked.

"That sleighing party when you took out that pretty Miss ———, oh, I forgot her name, but zounds! I don't forget her face though—she was a splendid creature. Why, you know who I mean, Ralston, that widow's daughter that you were so crazy after one spell. Don't you remember? I married you that night."

A faint hue flushed Mr. Ralston's face, but left it paler than before.

"Yes, yes, I remember," he answered, hastily, and would have started another topic of conversation, had it not been that Mr. Harold continued,

"And I, too, remember it right well, for a fine fright I had about it. You know I went through the ceremony for Phil Norris and his ladye love; and bless you, her parents found it out, and talked of prosecuting me. Of course, if I had not imbibed a little too much of that hot whiskey punch I should never have gone so far: but then it all turned out right for them, for neither Phil nor his wife have repented the match, I warrant."

"My God! Arthur! You don't mean to have me understand that I was that night legally married!" exclaimed Mr. Ralston, springing to his feet.

"Come, come, it is too late to quarrel about that now," answered Mr. Harold.

"Quarrel about it! Arthur Harold, if you can prove that to have been a legal marriage, I will give you the half of my fortune."

Great beaded drops stood upon Mr. Ralston's face, so intense was his excitement—the muscles of his face quivered, and his breath came pantingly.

Mr. Harold knew there was no trifling there.

"Yes, Harry, you are a married man. I can prove that if you wish it to be proven."

Mr. Ralston sank back in his chair, overcome by his strong emotion. Tears crept through the pale, slender fingers that were pressed over his eyes—tears of joy that his pure and lovely child could now wear her name unblushingly. Edith's melancholy moods had, of late, given her father increasing anxiety concerning her. He attributed all to her exceeding sensitiveness, not knowing that another sorrow was busy at her

heart; for Edith had withheld the confidence which she knew would distress her father still more, as she remained firm in her determination to lead a secluded life, and by no alliance to share the disgrace that she felt so keenly.

Nothing could equal her surprise, when, upon her father's return that night, he communicated to her the news which had given him so much joy.

She saw at a glance that her unfortunate mother had been no less sinned against, as the marriage had been considered but a jest; and yet, she was sufficiently alive to the opinion of the world to rejoice that she had a legal claim upon her father for his love as well as his fortune.

Clasped in his arms, she kept back from him no longer the story of her love, and well pleased was her father to hear that the son of his old friend had wooed Edith when she was considered but a portionless orphan.

Mr. Ralston was not long in making satisfactory explanations of Edith's conduct to Frank, who in turn took his season of exaltation in informing his parents what a regular Cinderella his little sewing girl had turned out to be.

The engagement so pleasing to all, was in the course of a few weeks publicly announced.

Mr. Morris hearing of it, called one day at Mr. Harold's office.

After some common-place conversation, he said,

"I suppose you know, Mr. Harold, what claims the young lady, whom your son is going to marry, has to her name?"

Mr. Harold was prepared for his interference, and he answered promptly,

"Most certainly I do, sir, as none have better opportunities of knowing, having myself performed the marriage ceremony for her parents. I also know something of the patronage which

you extended to her, when she stood more in need of friends than she does now, and for any courtesies which you may have shown her then, I thank you in my son's name. I beg you to excuse me now, as my business demands my attention."

The discomfited Mr. Morris felt himself thwarted at every turn. He was at a loss to ascertain how much of sarcasm there might have been in Mr. Harold's speech, but he concluded that it would be more *politic* to acknowledge no hidden meaning.

Early the ensuing winter, Edith, as the happy bride of Frank Harold, took possession of the elegant home her father had prepared for her. In that home her aunt and cousins are frequent guests; but Mr. Morris has never yet ventured to cross the threshold, although Edith has sent him frequent invitations to join their reunions; she, rightly feeling that much ought to be sacrificed and endured before family ties are broken, or hearts estranged, who from the same source have caught their pulsation.

Mrs. Ralston, Edith's grandmother, thinks it a weary month that passes without her presence, for a few hours at least in the old homestead; and even the surly grandpapa loses some of his moroseness at sight of her lovely, laughing face, and the sound of her sweet, low voice.

Every year, upon the anniversary of Edith's birth, Mr. Ralston closets himself alone. What passes there, in the solitude of his room, is known only to himself and his God. Bitter tears, and broken prayers, and remorseful thoughts, as he pictures her hours of anguish, must at least be his portion then; and thus must it be until he goes down into the grave, to sleep by the side of his betrayed love. When the last trump shall have awakened him, may we not hope that his repentance will avail him before that Judge "who seeth not as men see?"

QUITE A ROMANCE.

BY CLARENCE MAY.

BRECHDALE lay lovingly in the warm sunlight of a summer's evening, as I sat conversing with my old friend and school companion, Charlie B——, whom I had not seen for some years. Many and sweet were the memories that came crowding upon us, as we mused upon the "dear old time," when we were

"——friends together.
In sunshine and in shade."

"What a strange thing life is," continued Charlie, as we spoke of the many changes that had taken place since we had met. "We are the mere creatures of fate and circumstances, and must yield to their decision without a will of our own. And yet it is this very mysterious destiny, that oftentimes brings up the most happiness; for the merest trifle, or the slightest adventure, may occasion the most unforeseen and wonderful results. I could relate a little romance of my own life-history in proof of this, if you are in the mood to listen."

"Oh, proceed at once," I exclaimed. "This evening seems made to listen to some sweet tale."

"Several years ago," commenced my friend, "I was spending the winter in the pleasant city of Philadelphia. One gloomy evening, in February, I think, feeling somewhat under a depression of spirits, I concluded to go to the theatre, to witness a favorite drama, and prevailed upon my room-mate to accompany me. We arrived before the curtain arose, and while the orchestra was pouring forth a full tide of delicious melody; but we found the boxes already nearly filled with the beauty and fashion of the city. The play announced on the bills was 'Romeo and Juliet,' and a beautiful and popular actress was to take the part of the heroine.

"I was not a little anxious to witness this representation, especially the part of 'Juliet;' but until she made her appearance, my attention was wholly occupied and riveted by two young ladies who were seated in the box on our right. My friend, who had an opera-glass, was coolly pointing it upon the beauty in every direction, without appearing to encounter any object of sufficient attraction to fix his optics; but mine, as I have said, were utterly absorbed in contemplating the two young creatures so near to us on

our right. They appeared to be sisters, and certainly were ladies—so far, at least, as the inference was warranted by manners gentle—accents soft—eyes dark and pensive—brows pure and white—and cheeks, which, naturally pale, were shadowed into a tinge the most touching by the full black hair that clustered and gloomed above them. They were alone, and seated on the back bench of the box; and so near us that their very breathing was audible. 'Who can they be?' I caught myself repeatedly asking my friend, whose attention was now too much engrossed by the play, and the sorrows of the 'gentle Juliet,' to admit of his making any response to my queries.

"The taller, and seemingly elder sister, nearest us, was the fairer and favorite of the two; but not a glance could I catch of those magical eyes, whose long, dark lashes veiled a light which I could not doubt it would have been dangerous to encounter—and yet, who ever shrunk from such encounter! There was an air of repose, as seductive as it was beautiful and bland—an ineffable calm, partaking almost of sadness—that mantled over the features and the whole figure of this elder one; but it was a sadness sweeter to the fancy, and dearer to the heart, than any laughing lighter graces that ever mirth dispensed to the loveliest of her daughters. How little do your loud, gossiping, and laughter-loving females understand this secret of woman's truest charm, and higher, holier grace! I have known a whole theatre disturbed by the impudent assurance of an empty-headed woman of fashion, who, with a good face, a tiara of turbans, and a profusion of gold and diamonds, seemed to imagine herself free to abuse decency, and challenge the common sense and respect of those around her. Far otherwise was the deportment of the sisters at the Walnut. They spoke, not indeed in whispers, but so low, so sweetly, yet audibly—in short, so like ladies, that, together with other graces, it was not in mortal to resist the fascination; and, for days after, I was so enslaved by an hourly recurrence to the beautiful vision of the past night, that there was no toil, no trial, no privation I would not willingly have encountered and endured, to have purchased the rapture of a single pressure of the small white hand,

which, withdrawn from its soft envelope, I had seen occasionally raised to adjust, by one brief, faint touch, the modest jewel that gemmed the dark hair, like some beautiful thing of magic that had nestled near the source of thoughts, which, I would have pledged my life, were high and holy, such as angels would not have blushed to know!

"But the play proceeded, and the brilliant performance of this beautiful drama of Shakespeare's engaged my attention also; and it was not until the curtain had fallen upon the last scene, and the lovely young *tragedienne* was led before it to receive a shower of applause and bouquets, that I directed my gaze to my fair neighbors—when, imagine my chagrin and astonishment, I saw—an empty box!—the fairies were gone—

*
'Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below'—

And a momentary blank and sort of blight was left upon my sensations. With Alexander Smith I could have exclaimed—

'God! what a light has passed away from earth
Since my last look!'

A plague upon fortune and the world, thought I, who set their villainous heads together to perplex and defeat us—the one proffering that which the other is sure to take away.

"I at once prepared to leave the theatre also, for I felt that wine and motion would be the best cure for the sincere melancholy I now experienced, and for which I was angry with myself; and yet I could not help it. I could not go away though, without once more gazing into the deserted box, hallowed by such a sweet vision of loveliness—when my glance fell upon a beautiful pearl card-case lying upon the seat occupied by the elder sister. To snatch it joyfully up and open it was the work of a moment, when on the small and neatly written cards I read the name of 'Julie Livingstone.' I have at last her name, thought I, and how musically it sounded to me! I treasure the card-case carefully, and carried it with me wherever I went—I felt that we *must* meet again, and that this was the mysterious link to bring us together. I visited the theatre again and again, and other places of amusements, but in vain; that sweet face, imaged far in my heart as the purest dream of my life, greeted not my anxious and inquiring gaze, from among the gay crowds around me. It was then that I fully realized the words of a poet—that she was but

'A lovely apparition sent,
To be a moment's ornament.'

"The winter fled by, and the warm and dreamy summer called many of the inhabitants of the crowded city to sylvan retreats in the country and by the sea-shore. I was among the number, and was quietly passing the hours at a fashionable watering-place, with no more particular aim than that of health and amusement. One evening, as I was seated on the portico, reading, a carriage drove up, and a gentleman and two ladies alighted. My first glance was careless, but the second full of interest. That form! surely I had seen it before—and then I caught a glimpse of her face—it was Julie's! Ah, you may imagine my delight. What a magic that presence had upon me—the earth seemed fairer and brighter, and that sweet summer's evening still lives in my memory.

"I saw her no more that evening, but my dreams that night were pleasant ones. Julie was beneath the same roof, and was mingled with many a sweet vision of love and happiness. The next day, through the influence of some friends, I sought, and easily obtained an introduction. She was accompanied by her parents—her sister being absent at a boarding-school. That night, as we walked together in the moonlight, I drew forth the treasured card-case, and in low words related its history, and how I had sought for its owner. Many a soft blush flitted over the fair face of my listener during the recital—she too remembered the evening, and missed the card-case afterward, but never dreamed it would be returned thus.

"I will not linger over those pleasant summer days, and nights of moonlight, music and love, although their memory is so sweet. Time still pressed on more swiftly than ever, even though unperceived by us; for,

'How lightly falls the foot of Time,
When treading only flowers!'

"At length the family made preparations to leave the Springs; but even then we were not separated, for I became the travelling companion of Julie, and accompanied the family to their beautiful summer residence on the banks of the fair Schuylkill. Here I spent a few short weeks more, of uninterrupted happiness. Together we rode and walked along those fair shores, and enjoyed the brightest scenes of nature, for our hearts beat in unison—together we read from some favorite poet, or breathed to each other the young romance awakening in our hearts; and when I left that happy and delightful home, Julie Livingstone had promised to be mine."

"And this Julie," cried I, interrupting my

friend, "is your beautiful wife, to whom you introduced me yesterday?"

"The same," said he, smiling.

"Well, my dear fellow, let me congratulate

you," returned I. "That was indeed an adventure—would that all life's romances might end as happily."

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MARIE TREVOR.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW NURSE.

"THE new nurse, if you please, my lady, by the baronet's order."

Lady Walden looked up from her book, with an expression of pleasure.

"What kind of a looking lady is she, Ware? Does she seem the right sort of a woman to take care of my darling? Has she been married? I wonder if she has experience!"

"Bless you, my lady," exclaimed Ware, bending somewhat her stately demeanor, "she's a young thing, and judging by her face, not a married person—but a well enough looking body, only so genteel."

"Well, send her up, Ware. I had best see for myself, though your judgment is excellent; and of course the baronet would not have selected an improper person to take charge of our sweet little Aimee, heaven bless her," she continued, turning to bend over a beautiful infant who slept soundly by her side.

She softly lifted the covering of lace, as her maid left the room, disclosing the white, dimpled arms disposed in careless grace on the breast, and the richly-worked slip of the infant. The fingers so wee and waxen were tightly locked, and it required but little fancy to imagine that they were thus pressed by the invisible hands of angels. A pretty infant is always loveliest in sleep; the cherub-like innocence reposing on lip and brow—the halo of purity wrapping the being, as it were, in light celestial, and stamping the smile of heaven where only heaven is reflected, give to the infant that charm that mingles awe with our devotion, as if we gazed on something freshly touched by the hand of Deity.

Perhaps Lady Walden's thoughts took the form of worship as she glanced mutely upon her babe—for reverently she slid down upon her knees, and gazed till the coming tears dimmed her bright eyes, and intensity of feeling brought a crimson flush on either fair cheek. She started as the door opened, and hastily composing herself, looked up carelessly at the figure emerging through the open door.

It was that of a young girl—full, yet symmetrical. Her face had more than ordinary intelligence and beauty. A certain firmness gave to her features that character that inspires respect, and the Lady Walden unawares bowed as she spoke—then proceeded to test whether she had the necessary qualifications for a child's nurse.

"What is your name?" she asked, unconsciously fastening her gaze upon the youthful face.

"Ruth Goldfinch, my lady," answered the pretty girl, blushing and casting down her eyes—yet did it not seem the hue of modesty; that rosy blush.

"Goldfinch—Goldfinch," repeated the lady, slowly, "I am certain I have heard that name before—ah! I have it—in the village grave-yard beyond Waldenwold," she continued, musingly, "there is one grave shaded by a white rose-bush. I never went there but what I found fresh flowers on that grave, no matter what the season. On a tiny brown stone is a name engraved—simply—Rose Goldfinch. Was she a relation, my good girl?"

"We were twin sisters," exclaimed Ruth, in a voice subdued—but with a manner that seemed as if she were conquering violent emotion. The faint color faded from her cheeks—her lips trembled, and striving in vain to conquer feeling, she burst into tears, gave one or two quick sobs—then rapidly dashed the water from her eyes, and in a moment was calm again.

"I was very thoughtless," said the youthful mother, in a vexed, low voice—"but go with Ware and compose yourself; then come back to the nursery and I will give you your charge—by that time little Aimee will be awake. I must engage her," she continued, as the door closed, "such tenderness of feeling bodes good. I have heard somewhere that this sister of hers was unfortunate—'frail and fair,' poor weak thing—Ruth is pretty, but if I am a judge of character there is little weakness in hers. How quickly she commanded herself! There was a bravery in that action, I could not but respect—but hark! there she is again, and my darling moves uneasily."

The young girl came respectfully forward, and listened to Lady Walden's directions with fixed attention. She had taken off her bonnet and shawl, and in a dress of some pink color and large apron of white, with a small cap whose wide strings were tied gracefully under her chin, and a little corner of muslin pinned neatly over her bosom, she looked pretty enough to please the most fastidious taste.

"Now," said Lady Walden, as she finished, "I have some calls to make, and I shall leave you with Ware. Take good care of my little Aimee, and you will find this a pleasant, agreeable home."

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIRTH-DAY FETE.

WARE went out to help her lady dress, leaving the nurse with the babe. It had gone to sleep again, innocent creature—but its rest was no longer deep and hushed. A trembling of the transparent lids, a flitting smile, a long sigh, succeeded by a transient quiet—a fitful jerking of the hands; first one cheek then the other rubbed caressingly over the pillow—a languid opening of the eyes, a languid closing them again—an unconscious smile—a quick look of affright—and again the peace of smiling sleep. Then all at once a waking up of every faculty, followed by a gaze of wonder, as if the light of its own consciousness—the faces around it were all miracles to its narrow vision. How still it laid, like the good babe it was, following with its mild eyes of blue perchance the movements of some cherub sent to be its little guide—to introduce its mind gradually to the dim realities of this lower life—perhaps the flickering fragments of light and shade playing on the white curtains of its nursery bed—reflected from a globe of water in which tiny gold-fish were gambolling.

Ruth stood by its side, but not so that the babe might notice a stranger. She stood with a mournful expression, bringing her hands up slowly to her bosom, and crossing them there. First, a bitter smile flitted over her face—then came a look of gloom, in which a sort of hate was visible.

"The rich—aye! the *rich* and the *great* have all these treasures, in peace and happiness," she muttered. "*They* are not tempted—they are never sought to their ruin. They marry the choice of their hearts—they have their children and keep them—keep them without fear or shame, and never blush to hear them named. Little Rose was as beautiful as she—much like her—but she is dead—her mother is dead—but

her *father* lives, and what does he care that the victims of his baseness have gone with broken hearts—leaving others with breaking hearts! What does *he* care that he has brought disgrace upon brothers, sisters, and an old grey-headed father? But he shall suffer. My prayer is heard at last, I am here"—with a glance of triumph she gazed around the noble nursery—"here, with the means of vengeance in my own hands—here, with the best drop of his life's blood in my charge—ah! I'll wring it out—I'll give him sorrow for sorrow—I'll——"

Her manner lost its tragic fierceness, as at that moment Ware entered, and going toward the bed took up the infant—a grim smile playing over her thin features. She had so stiff and odd a way with her whenever she moved or talked—she held the child with such precision, and measured her words in so mechanical a manner, that Ruth began to feel a little awe of her, and to wonder if she was to take care of the young lady Aimee, under *her* superintendence. But the sedate lady's maid, with becoming condescension, soon made her feel more at her ease, and after a while Ruth became reconciled to her manner, and forgot reserve.

"How old is she?" she asked, timidly, as Ware gave the infant in her charge.

"She'll be a year on a week come Tuesday, and we're to have great times, I expect."

"Why?" asked Ruth, smoothing out the folds of the infant's rich frock.

"Why!" echoed Ware, with an accent of astonishment, "why, to be sure, but that it's her birth-day, the darling. Don't you know what they do in great families like the baronet's—how they have lords and ladies here, with a dinner and a party and such like, and the park all lighted up, and dancing in the hall, and fireworks out in the garden, and streamers in the house, and everything grand and splendid?—but how should you know? I 'spose you've never lived in a rich family before."

Ruth was bending over the babe—and Ware intent upon her description, did not note the burning flush that spread upon cheek and brow, and then receded, leaving a rim of white only around the eyes and lips.

"No! I've never lived in *any* family before," she answered, with a hard, forced voice—"isn't it strange," she continued, with the same accent, "how some are born to all these things, and others," her brow grew very dark as she spoke, "come only to suffer and to make others suffer—to live in misery, and grow sick and die, and be laid away in the old grave-yard?"

"To *my* mind, if they die young, that's the

best of it," answered *Ware*, quietly, her eyes fixed upon her knitting, "for they're sure to go to heaven, and that's better than to live for what lot you can't say."

"Yes; it is better—it is," muttered *Ruth*, yet with a gesture of impatience—but the babe smiled in her face, and as instantly the look of hate faded, and her eyes filled with tears. "Oh!" she thought, "I shall love her too well, for she looks like little *Rose*. But my purpose is fixed; if there is suffering in store for such as he—I'll bring it to his lips, even the very dregs."

To be sure the baronet of *Waldenwold* came of a good family—an ancient family—though not quite as ancient as my own, for as *Dickens* says, "the last man, whoever he is, will have a longer pedigree than the greatest nobleman now alive"—and "he who was born three hundred years ago cannot reasonably be expected to have had as many relations before him as one who is born now." However, the baronet was not born three hundred years ago—nor yet one, for it was only in the year 18—that his age numbered some five and thirty—and a young rogue of four sturdy summers, and my "young *Lady Aimee*"—already called him papa—although the youngest, on account of her Hebrew accent could hardly be understood. Rumor—I mean the lady with velvet slippers and mealy mouth—had in years past been busy with the baronet's fair fame; but, he went over to Germany, staid several years—brought home a pretty blonde with unpronounceable name, and an immense fortune, who of course thought her husband the best and the handsomest man in the world—and his lordship's petty sins were forgiven.

The baronet had really reformed. He loved his wife dearly, after his fashion, and she more than idolized him, for her love partook of the spirit of worship. One would indeed have so concluded to have seen her sitting fondly at his feet—her sunny face bathing in the light of his dark eyes—while in all the world, her manner seemed to say, there could not be a mortal as perfect as her own dear husband.

The baronet was indeed a man of surpassingly noble exterior. One would exclaim, looking upon those features cast in the mould of manly beauty, surely guile dwelt never there. No thought unworthy heaven could enter the soul that looked out from those clear eyes. There could be no stain upon his hands, no crime in his heart locked away all carefully from human sight.

But He who looketh down from heaven knoweth the secret thoughts of the heart, and in His own time will He mete justice to the transgressor.

One morning the baronet entered his wife's private sitting-room, and sauntered slowly up to the light work-table where the *Lady Walden* sat, busily employed upon some glittering fabric. He threw himself upon a tapestried couch at her side, and carelessly picked up a portion of the embroidery as it fell over the fair fingers, and on the silken robe of the lady.

"And pray what is this foolish little affair for?" he asked, striving to look grave as if his language meant reproach, "are you never wearied of such trifles?"

"Trifles," exclaimed the lady, a blush heightening her beauty, "do you call everything pertaining to our darling, a trifle? Why look you, *George*—it is her birth-day robe?—is it not beautiful? I sent it to *Madame Sartegre* to be embroidered, but when it came home, I couldn't bear the thought that baby should wear anything that had not in some manner been fashioned by me; so I am putting around the body this little frill of rich lace. You see the points will show so beautifully on her darling little shoulders. Isn't she a sweet creature, dear *George*?"

"Oh! she's rather a decent-looking baby," he replied, his eyes twinkling roguishly.

"Rather decent-looking," cried *Lady Walden*, ringing a silver bell, "*Handy*," she added, to a servant, "tell *Ruth* to bring *Lady Aimee* here—and you shall hold her for an hour, and see in how many respects she resembles yourself—just to punish you," she continued, turning to her husband.

At that moment in came *Ruth*, holding the beautiful child very daintily, herself composed and lady-like in manner.

"Take her to her father," said *Lady Walden*, and the baronet took the babe, although as he received her from *Ruth*'s arms there was a momentary embarrassment, imperceptible to any but the eye of the fond wife. *Ruth* moved away to a seat at the side of the room, and the baronet handling the little plaything, as he called her, very tenderly, listened to the comments of his wife, who now held up the long robe—laying it over the dancing limbs—now dimpled the pretty cheek with her own fair fingers.

"I think we'll change the order of ceremonies on the occasion of little *Aimee*'s birth-day," he said, looking up to his wife from the infant.

"In what manner?" asked the lady, stopping her task to gaze admiringly on the treasures—"we shall of course give our usual party—you certainly would not let such a day pass without in some manner celebrating it."

"Certainly not—but what do you think now of having the fete in *Hazelwood*? It is but six

miles out, you know—the weather is getting sultry—your villa will be finished, and we can christen that and celebrate the day together.”

“Oh! Hazelwood!” exclaimed the lady, delightedly, clapping her hands with almost childish glee, “that will be so nice. And will you have colored lights in the avenue, and in the grove? and supper in that beautiful hall—and dancing on the green—and music, and revels, and flowers? Oh! Aimee, sweet, I wish you were only old enough to enjoy it—what pleasure we shall take with her, George, when she is grown.”

“Aye! if she is spared to us,” answered her husband, in a deep voice, “such lovely creatures are but fragile things, you know.”

“There! you have dashed all my pleasure—though I am sure you did not mean to—but death, the thought of *death*, George, the mere thought of loveliness like that mouldering, turning from fair white and rose beauty into loathsome dust, oh! George, I am sure of it—I should die too were Aimee to die, indeed, indeed, George, I should,” and she laid her sunny head upon her husband’s shoulder forgetful of Ruth’s presence, and tears dropped on the forehead of her babe.

Ruth sat back, almost hidden by drapery, the crimson of which gave a ghastly glare to her dark eyes and deathly white cheeks. Her hands she held hard, and unconsciously clasped against her breast. There was an evil look on her face, too maturely evil for one so young, and in that little moment her brow had changed to haggardness. Anon, her lips would work convulsively, then she would close them firmly over her teeth till the muscles grew rigid.

“Both mother and child,” she said, to herself, with a vehemence that sent the blood rushing to her temples, “life for life—two mothers and two babes.”

“So then it is settled, I suppose,” said Lady Walden, forcing back her tears and assuming an air of gravity, “we are to have the fete at Hazelwood. Well, I’m glad I know it now, for to-morrow I should have made arrangements for home. Mercy on me! what a busy body I must be, to be sure; it is well Harry’s birth-day comes in midwinter, and Aimee’s in June.”

“Stop till we have six birth-days to celebrate in a year, instead of two,” said the baronet, playfully, at which Lady Walden held up her hands with affected horror, and yet blushed so beautifully that the baronet paid her a compliment.

After which Ruth, as she was bidden, took the babe, who, in spite of its beauty, seemed inclined to distort its little features after the manner of

infant’s great and little, nobles or boors, and carried it out lying tenderly upon her bosom.

CHAPTER III.

RUTH’S STORY.

“MERCY on us, child, how pale you look!” cried Ware, with unfeigned astonishment, as Ruth came slowly into the nursery; “you are sick or something—what has happened?”

“Nothing,” said Ruth, abstractedly.

“Nothing! just turn to my lady’s mirror; there! did nothing give that white look to your face? No, no—I hope there’s nothing ill of you.”

“Ill of me!” exclaimed Ruth, startlingly, “ill, that voice never meant bodily ill—what do you mean, that I’m not *honest*?”

“Oh! no, no, to be sure not,” answered Ware, soothingly—then as Lady Walden came in, (it was her wont to spend some hours, herself attending to the welfare of her babe, for which give her due praise) she said, “Come, tell the story of which you spoke last night. I’m sure it will please my lady, and you can tell a thing so good, that I’m sure you must have better learning, or else a better head-piece than most of your class.”

“What! does Ruth profess to be a story maker?” asked Lady Walden, looking up with her sunny face that actually diffused its beams over the girl’s pale features.

“I can tell some *true* stories, my lady,” answered Ruth, the faintest color coming to each cheek.

“Let me hear one then, and by all means tell me something of your peasantry. I am a German, and of course unacquainted with the habits of the lower classes here; come, begin while my little daughter sleeps—but I must caution you,” she added, pleasantly, “against telling those thoughtless stories which many do, about ghosts and things supernatural, to my children, I should never allow it.”

“My father and my mother were both church people, my lady,” answered Ruth, with simple dignity, “they taught me better than that.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said Lady Walden; “but come, your story, I hope it will be a joyous one, for—I know not why, I am in low spirits this morning.”

Ruth smiled, but there was a sneer half concealed in her smile as she answered, “It shall be true—but perhaps not as pleasing as you could wish,” and she continued.

“There once lived on the borders of the county road in Bradley, a thrifty farmer and his family.

Their cottage stood under a group of thriving elms, and away from the bustle of the thoroughfare. It was of stone, well built, neatly furnished, and surrounded by the finest garden and ploughing land in the county. The front door was broad and gaily painted—the great flag stone that served for a step, said to have been pressed by the foot of one of the kings of England, worn smooth and polished by long usage. The entry, straight and long, gave egress at the back by a small door of lattice-work, through which the golden sun-flowers, tall lilies and old-fashioned sweet-scented roses, gave pleasure of sight and perfume.

"It was said by those who knew them, that farmer G——'s family must be the happiest in the wide world. The wife was handsome, of the temper of a lamb, winning in her ways, and never was her brow known to be shadowed by a frown of anger. The farmer in his young days was straight, tall, and finely formed. His parents had given him what few of his station have, a good, common education—and he was with his pleasing manners and noble form, quite looked up to and revered by his less intelligent neighbors. Four sons were born to them, bright, promising children, and they had grown almost into manhood when two beautiful babes were added, twin sisters, who at once became the idols of the neighborhood, stars of the heaven of home."

"Stop!" exclaimed Lady Walden, abruptly, "where did you get so much poetry from?" and she gazed on the girl with a look of blank astonishment.

"If I have any poetry," was the simple reply, "it was born with me."

"You are a singular girl," remarked the lady, "but, go on."

"It was said that in their infancy these children were possessed of extreme loveliness, and as they grew up some new charm seemed developed from hour to hour. They were constantly together, and only that one, more timid than the other, clung to her sister for protection, and looked to her as to the stronger mind for guidance, no difference might have been observable. But as womanhood brought fresh graces, it gave a different character to the beauty of each. Lilly, as she was called by the neighbors, grew fairer and more spiritually delicate. Her hair was light, almost as light as yours, Lady Walden—her eyes were large, and blue and pale, yet exceedingly lustrous. She was fond of the dance, the song—the romance of the world—she looked upon her humble station with constrained content—she dreamed in the daylight—in the twilight—in the starlight, and her dreams were

always of coming greatness. Her form was very slender, her arms, hands, and feet peculiarly elegant—her taste nearly perfect, and the exceeding simplicity of her toilet was the result of unstudied and naturally acquired art.

"Her sister was not nearly as beautiful—her hair was darker, her eyes deeper, her form not as symmetrical—and a shade of thought, perhaps at times of sadness, made her seem uncordial. She loved books and solitude—she loved to sit for hours in what her father called his library, and amuse herself with the old books, all moth-eaten and binding broken. She, too, dreamed—but she fashioned her dreams on paper, after her sister had laid her fair head upon the pillow and innocently slept. It is not everybody that sleeps innocently," said Ruth, rapidly, lifting her eyes to the lady's earnest face, but those placid features reflected naught of guile, and Ruth's eyes dropped again.

"Everybody said that the twins had more than ordinary genius—so the father and the brothers, and even the mother labored harder, that they might give them more than ordinary accomplishments. Bitter day that they did that.

"A teacher of music came to the quiet village. He was a young man, of handsome exterior; words cannot describe his grace, his noble mien, his purity of language and delicacy of sentiment. He had frequently seen the twins together—sitting on the porch by the garden side, sewing or knitting—reclining under the old oaks while the silvery beams of the moon made a circle of glory around each fair young head. He noted how they were revered by the villagers—how the hearts of their parents, now growing well nigh hoary, clung with idolatrous fondness to them—how the brothers came from their own homes and their own wives and little ones (the youngest was not married) to hear their sweet sisters sing in the quiet evening, and play their simple lutes. He saw them at church in their dresses of muslin, and hats of plaited straw, sitting in the slip with old and young on either side; he saw them taking their pleasant walks over the commons and returning with beautiful nosegays that they had gathered from unconscious earth. He saw them in their dresses of plain homespun, moving about their bright but humble home—baking, churning, spinning; he met them at the merry-makings of the farmers, and noted with what deference they were ever treated; he heard them sing and affected raptures; he wormed himself into the confidence of the old father, and offered to teach them without pay.

"Lilly was her father's favorite. She had a way with her, which the other had not. She

could fondle, kiss, and murmur sweet things—she could change her countenance to every shade of feeling so nicely—she could so—and so lovingly supersede others, too, never causing the slightest jealousy, that no wonder she was the favorite. And even the twin sister tacitly seemed to feel that in the gentler, more beautiful, more witching creature, there was something sweeter to love—and every night and morning she folded her to her heart with a prayer and a blessing, and never heard her praised but with a heart throbbing with delight.

"So when everybody spoke rapturously of the clever young teacher, the handsome young teacher—and when it began to be whispered that his attentions pointed particularly to the village Lilly, though the hearts at home bled, they were all proud; for both had talents, and his were rare and many. But the sister suffered most. She was now alone, and often she frequented old and wonted haunts, and falling upon the moss near the grass and the flowers, wept till her heart near broke with the grief. Still, when she met the lovers, looking so pleased and contented, and saw with what hope and affection they regarded each other, she forced herself to smile them welcome, and almost to feel happy in their perfect happiness.

"The twin sister needed not to be told the sequel, that the vows of love, undying love, had been exchanged, for she knew by the tighter grasp of those beautiful arms about her neck—by the deepening blush, and tears that only lent a brighter joy to that fair countenance—she knew as well as spoken words might say.

"And when will my darling sister be the happy wife of Conrad Wersten?" she asked.

"Immediately, on his return—*immediately*," was the answer; and with an accent so alarming, a manner so suddenly wild, though it was instantly subdued, that it frightened the other.

"He has gone, then—and for how long?"

"Only for a little—he *swore* it should be but for a little while," was the answer; still with that strange manner—and then came a cold, tremulous chill through every vein and artery of her sister; a dim horror—a nightmare of the heart, that even shook her frame. She knew nothing, but she *felt* that evil in horrible though uncertain shape stood near her, with its awful throng of airy phantoms."

"Ruth, girl, how you look at me!" exclaimed Lady Walden, shivering, "you actually seem to be living over some great trouble; your powers too, of description, of imagery—I can hardly tell what to think."

The flush had gone from the maiden's brow;

she no longer gazed wildly upon her mistress, but calmly casting her eyes to the floor, said, "I told you it might be a sad story; however, I will stop, I think Ware wishes me to."

Ware had been striving some time, by sundry winks and nods and nudgings, to arrest her story, frightened, it might be, by her lady's steady and entranced attention, so foreign to the childish, impetuous manner of the young mother.

"It is nothing to Ware," said Lady Walden; "pray, go on," she added, unconsciously using the term and attitude of polite entreaty. "I am really anxious to hear what happened. I hope this music teacher was no disguised nobleman—who—"

"He *was* a disguised nobleman," exclaimed Ruth, in a voice so powerful that the lady started. "Aye! he lured the bird—the gentle, timid, lovely singing-bird—he broke its wing and then set open the door of its cage to tempt it with the sight of liberty. Days and weeks went on, and the smile was but little less bright on Lilly's cheek; months passed, only a few, and the neighbors began to wonder; a few more passed—then came visions of a sick chamber—a poor unfortunate babe—a broken-hearted mother, dead, in another room—a gentle-hearted brother, driven mad—*mad*—a father bowed down in living, helpless sorrow—in his old age, bowed down in shame—fathom that word if you can. And the twin sister—it was *her* duty to linger about that frail one, to soothe her as she wept almost tears of blood, to be a support for the broken stem, to hold up the bruised Lilly, and attempt to wash the stain from its whiteness. In vain! that could never be done on earth; so she knelt to implore it of heaven—but *there*, in the presence of purity came such overpowering feelings of loathing and revenge toward *him* who had broken down the old tree and the clinging vines, and ruthlessly stamped the flowers out upon them, that she could not die—not *dare* to pray.

"The hearse and few mourners followed one broken heart to its resting-place of dust and cold grey tomb-stones—another was carried away, raving, to the home of the shattered and wrecked in intellect—another sat in his door-way, weeping, (oh! miserable! to see an old man weep!) draining his grief away with his life; tottering on his staff, and with his bitter, briny tears moistening the cold, hard earth. Left all alone, disgraced, his silvery hair pointed at with the memory of sin and shame.

"By-and-bye came a feeble moving over the floor; and the pale being clasping her little one,

grew more to the heart that remained. Her brothers cursed her destroyer—yet they did not the less love her; the twin sister blamed both silently, but one with hate and the desire of vengeance.

One day, the gladdest day that summer has seen, the poor, frail thing was missed. Her babe slept quietly; its cheek unstained by a tear—but the fragile—the lost—the worshipped one had gone. What anguish it was to find under her pillow, carefully pinned up in an old paper, all her long, golden, beautiful tresses—oh! the sight caused madness. And there too were her letters—his letters in a little tear-stained package; there was the plain ring he had given her, besides all her little hoard of jewelry, simple enough. A chain of coral—a cornelian clasp—a hair bracelet, that once looked so pretty on her beautiful arm—three rings, birth-day gifts, all left for her lonely sister. Oh! the confusion at the farm-house that day—the running to and fro, and calling out and weeping; it was awful, awful. And the sister could not go, for the little one claimed all her time, poor, frail thing. She sat in a sort of stupor, only moving as the babe moved, and by its restlessness claimed her attention. At last a crowd came to the house—she laid the babe down and looked forth with wildly beating heart. One of the foremost held a chip hat, from which fluttered a blue, limp ribbon, the wet dripping from it drop by drop; another gathered in his grasp something white and blue, which the poor girl knew was the mantle of her ruined sister. Happily she knew and saw no more, but for hours laid insensible—until, when she could bear it, they told her the melancholy story. They had travelled for miles, dragging every narrow river—searching every out-of-the-way place, until they came to a broad and rapid stream on the very borders of Bradley, where the current rolls swift and strong. There on the sedgy banks at that part called Hazelwood they found her bonnet, mantle, and slippers. They did not care to search for her body, for the current is very rapid, and they did not doubt but the poor creature might be thrown up on some bank along the side, where she would be discovered, unless it was carried to the ocean."

"Was she drowned; and *there*?" asked Lady Walden, her face grown ashy white, and her absence of motion betraying intense interest—"at Hazelwood! why there is where the baronet has just built his villa, where little Aimee is to be christened. How unfortunate! I wish you had not told me this story."

"You wished me to," was the calm answer.

"Well, well, so I did—but go on——"

"I have no more to say," replied Ruth.

"Was the body ever found?"

"No—but a plain stone in the little burial-ground outside of Waldenwood, where you have often seen fresh flowers thrown—where you have marked the simple name of 'Rose Goldfinch'—that shows that she is yet remembered."

"Your sister?" said the lady, slowly.

"She *was* my sister, lady," answered Ruth, tears springing to her eyes.

"And this villainous nobleman, have you ever found him out?—his life could hardly expiate his offence—do you know him?"

"My brothers do," she answered, shivering, "but he is powerful, and they are poor—yet," and she lifted her dark eyes, "God is in heaven still."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIRTH-DAY FETE.

AFTER Ruth's story, the girl was treated with almost marked respect—Lady Walden truly repeating that education after all was the only leveller, that mere distinctions of rank faded before it—"As who could help respecting this poor nurse girl, my dear," she added, "with her plain dress and unassuming habits better than that frippery thing, Lady Hoozle, who was so ignorant that she couldn't spell three lines correctly."

In the meantime great preparations were going on for the fete at Hazelwood. Orders were being constantly despatched from Waldenwood to various bakers, confectioners, perfumers, florists—cards of invitation delicately *scented* were afterward sent to all the "would-be delighted and so forth," upholsterers were busy at Hazelwood—gardeners were busy, porters were busy; great hampers stood at the doors surrounded by servants who were busy looking at them. Great parcels were being unpacked inside. On wide tables stood silver and glass-ware. Underneath dressers lazily reposed wine-bottles, in all the glory of cobwebs and dust, rejoicing in the light for the first time in forty years. Cato, the butler's man, was very gravely telling a little boy in ragged trousers who hadn't spoken, that 'twouldn't do for him to be "imperent" *there*, 'cause it 'twant no place to be imperent in—at the same time steadying himself by a broom-handle that threatened every two seconds to strike him in the face. A bottle that had burst its wire, and weeping at the accident, might have covered the floor with its tears if Cato hadn't benevolently dried them, and then wiped his mouth with his linen jacket-sleeve, stood with a few specks of white froth running

down its sides. To that undoubtedly the little boy with ragged trousers owed his moral lecture—a lecture which must have made immense impression, judging by what ragged jacket said as he turned to a companion, “Jim, if that old fellow had given me any more of that slang, I’d a walked into him quicker nor he did in that old bottle.”

Ware was there also, for none but she could contrive the little conveniences of her lady’s toilet chamber. And Ruth was also there, having been sent in the carriage with her charge, who needed an airing. The babe was sleeping on a little bed hastily contrived for her; the coachman a handsome but under-sized fellow, was explaining to some rather genteel stranger the crest on the arms of the carriage.

Ruth left the housekeeper and sauntered through the beautiful rooms. Heaps of splendor lay on either side, ready for transport into the niches intended for them. Here stood a rosewood sofa half unpacked, showing the crimson satin that composed its covering—there in boards a grand piano that “my lady” had herself ordered from Germany. Here, rearing his proud head, stood a superb rocking-horse for “my young lord,” who was at present constantly with the mother of his noble father, but who was expected with her to rejoin his parents at Hazelwood—there an elegant sort of cradle, covered with gilding and made in the form of a huge cockleshell—in fact, so many were the new things, that one could hardly get through their enumeration. Ruth gazed languidly at all this, and still went on till she came to a large front room on the second floor, intended for the sleeping chamber of the baronet and his lady. There the lady’s maid found her looking out gloomily on the wide, varying prospect of rich valley—upland with rivers meandering—low land where kine were browsing, and the wide sheet of water whereon some few tiny craft were pushing their way against the strong current.

“See!” exclaimed Ruth, violently agitated, “that is the water—and there—down there was the very spot.”

Ware looked her in the face inquiringly.

“I tell you it’s just there—*there* where the elm is broken half way from where the willows run down to the water’s edge—there *her* clothes were found—and there she must have plunged in.”

“For heaven’s sake don’t tell my mistress!” exclaimed Ware, with more than usual energy, shuddering as she spoke—“I beg you won’t mention it, for I know she’s nervous and maybe a little superstitious.”

“Aye! I hope *he’ll* see her,” said Ruth, in a low, musing voice, speaking as if she had lost all recollection of Ware’s presence, as indeed she had—“I hope *he’ll* see her coming up some night all dabbled with blood—with her hands stretched high and dripping—with her fair hair floating over her shoulders, and that sweet face turning him into stone with its glance—and I hope *he’ll* hear her too singing, as the Germans say the Loreley does, singing him to his doom—oh! if the dead did but appear, *I* would die, but to come to *him*.”

“Ruth Goldfinch, are you losing your senses, child? I believe you are, talking and running on in this queer manner—who do you mean by *him*? Don’t you know this is the baronet’s room—the baronet, my master—the noblest, most virtuous of lords, who wouldn’t harm a worm, and who loves my lady as his life?”

Ruth answered not—but gave the woman so strange a look that she stepped back a few paces, returning it with one of strong amazement; then the girl laughed hard and dry, tossed her head, and moved past Ware down stairs to her charge.

“I declare if *I* ain’t afraid of her,” muttered Ware, standing quite still and gazing where her form had disappeared—“I wonder,” she continued, soliloquizing—“I really *wonder* at my lady’s keeping her—why the girl is mad, though for certain she does well enough at times—still I’m afraid we’ll all rue it some day, for the loss of that sister of hers has unsettled her mind. To be sure they were twins, and to be sure it was aggravating to be deceived so—but heigh-ho! so it will be to the end of time, while there’s sin and sorrow and shame in the world.”

The night before the fete, a grand array of carriages drove up the principle avenue in front of Hazelwood Villa. Twilight had gone, and various servants stood near with torches to light them along to the house. The windows were blazing with illuminations, and Lady Walden, who had purposely delayed coming till every thing was completed, removed from room to room with ever increasing surprise.

“I am sure this world is a world of joy and beauty,” she exclaimed, as she stood the following morning with her husband at one of the bay windows, looking out upon the trees garlanded with flowers, and the pavilion extended on the green, its sheeny gloss fluctuating with the motion of the soft, cool air. “Why do we sigh sometimes and long for something we know not what?” she continued. “Why do we have such flashing, evil thoughts, that seem to set the heart on fire, and make the brain burn with the

fear of some impending evil. Last night I felt all this."

"Nonsense, it was because you were fatigued," said the baronet, soothingly, leading her to another window, from which she saw groups of young girls weaving flowers into wreaths and bouquets.

"Flowers are beautiful things," she said, musingly, "but how soon they fade."

"You are determined not to be pleasant, my love."

"Oh, yes, I *am* pleased, delighted," cried the lady, her eyes full of tears; and then she laughed to think how little cause *she* had then, or ever had for weeping. "It is a sweet river," she said, pointing to the water, touched by the first rays of the rising sun.

"Yes, a fine river," rejoined her husband, coldly.

"But then the idea that in some part of it some poor wretch may have slept for years—cold and slimy—wrung—"

"Eleanor, you are incorrigible," exclaimed the baronet, in a voice so loud and altered that she screamed with affright. "My love," he added, in a softer tone, "why *will* you hang on such horrid themes, on this the morning of our Aimee's birth-day? You have actually given me the blues."

"Why, I could hardly help it, my dear," returned his wife; "I have had such queer thoughts and fancies all night. I wish Ruth had never told me that story of her twin sister drowning herself in this river—only think! somewhere about *here*—do you know you look like a ghost?" she cried, quite startled at the changing color of her husband's face, "and your hand is like ice. Really I am so foolish—but this morning baby's nurse looked so wretched, and that revived thoughts of the old story, and so for the moment I felt uneasy, that's all. Don't let my foolish conduct worry you. Come now, I'll try with all my might to be cheerful. I'll go to baby and superintend her robing, so don't give one uneasy thought for me," and away she hurried, leaving her husband pallid, apprehensive, gazing as if he were looking down some infernal depth, from the window toward the stunted elm.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, in a voice altered and chilling, "why do we do deeds that haunt us like pale spectres through life? I thought in giving Ruth this place and caring for her, I should balance in some measure the harm I may have done her family, but, egad, if ever there was a devil, it lurks in that girl's eye. It must be that she knows me—or she would never look at me as she does;" and walking uneasily up

and down the apartment, the baronet settled his cogitations by an emphatic whistle, and applied himself desperately to his toilet.

Carriages began in the early morning to bring the noble guests, and a sumptuous breakfast was served in the great hall. Several bands in attendance played most ravishing melodies. Clouds swept occasionally over the sun as if to cool his ardor, yet not disguise his splendor. Nothing was ever seen, so said everybody, so beautiful as the day, and the little Lady Aimee, caressed by lords and ladies, the sweet child went admirably through all the persecution of hugs and rapturous kisses, and loud congratulations, so composedly and naturally, without evincing the slightest inclination to whimper—looking placidly upon everybody, that a certain bachelor earl was heard to say, were he sure of such a sweet-natured, smiling, handsome baby as that, he would get married himself.

The dinner—but there is no describing how really grand it was; how *exaltingly merry* the guests became, nor how "*uncommonly tipsy*" the servants. There is no describing the enthusiasm of the company when young Lady Aimee's health was drank—nor the beauty of the decorations—the bright faces, the unpremeditated jokes, the sly and cunning nothings. Suffice it to say that the company were in the height of unparalleled joy, when the appearance of a post chaise, the horse in a violent foam, and the driver so full of ale, or news, or both, that he tumbled from his seat, made everybody uncomfortable.

Instantly all was confusion—for a messenger had come—not to bring the baronet's mother, and his young heir, but news that "the venerable lady had suddenly fallen into a fainting fit, just as she was prepared, and on coming to, had sent immediately for the baronet and his lady to receive her blessing before it was too late—as she had evidently but a few hours to live."

Many and many charges did Lady Walden give Ruth about the baby. She felt not the least concern to leave it with the nurse, though had she marked the wild, haggard look on Ruth's face, particularly the purplish rim about her eyes, she might have demurred. But nobody noticed it in the general hubbub, and when the young mother came back for the third or fourth time, to kiss the baby, and repeat her directions, and to say that to-morrow before noon they would send for her—she stood still for some seconds and gazed mournfully in the face of the child.

"I'm only too glad it ain't *you*, sweet darling," she murmured, forcing back the tears; "I feared—I know not what—but it seemed as if some-

thing would happen to my baby. Sad enough indeed, as it is—how sudden and awful! Now, Ruth, I charge you take good care of her, and don't neglect her for an instant, I pray you, don't. What makes me hate to leave her so?" and once, and yet once again, kissing the crowing babe, she hurried away.

Ruth looked after her with a singular expression. A wild, exultant light danced in her restless eyes; she held the babe more closely, and talked to it as if she were not really conscious of what she was saying, looking abstractedly at the retiring crowd.

"It is—it is high tide at twelve," she muttered, "I must be ready; not for worlds would I fail, and to-morrow—proud deceiver, to-morrow," she gasped as she said it, "you shall have your reward. My pretty babe, I will not kill you—I will not drown you—but never, never more shall that proud man look upon your beauty—never more—never—never."

"Who are you muttering at?" said Ware, coming forward, attired in bonnet and shawl.

"What, are you going too?" asked Ruth, scarcely able to suppress a laugh of exultation; then changing her manner, she added, "how lonely it will be here, nobody but baby and I."

"Oh, no," answered Ware, quickly, "some of the company's to stay, and I shall only be a little way off. I'm going to see an old friend up at Hackleby's farm—and—I don't know," she added, slowly, "but you might take baby and go too—if you are in the least afraid to sleep alone."

"I had rather stay," said Ruth, with a quick and anxious manner, "I never feel afraid—beside, I shall have baby with me."

"Just as you please," added Ware; "and you've no need, you know, to say a word about—about my going; Lady Walden might take it unkind of me, but you see there's nothing I can do here, and as I shall be back in plenty time for the first carriage——"

"You needn't fear that I shall mention it," said Ruth; "if—if you'll just do me a favor," she added, hesitatingly. "If you are going to Hackleby's farm, you pass directly by my father's. By the time you get there they'll all be asleep, for they never light candles; but if you would just slip a letter from me in between the shutters so they'll see it when they open them in the morning, it'll be a great favor, you don't know how great a favor," and with trembling eagerness she took a little package from her bosom.

"Oh! if that's all it can easily be done. Give me the letter, and mind when you take off baby's slip, fold it carefully and put it in the glass box gilt with flowers, and place a bit of spice in it.

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That dress cost forty pounds, and that's more than you or I could earn in a year, I know. Now good-night—plenty here to keep you company," she added, pointing to a few couples walking slowly through the grounds, discussing the question whether, after all, it would be anything so very improper to light the lamps in the branches, "just to see how they would look, you know," and keep the band in readiness to play. The majority of the company thought not, as the baronet had left no orders, and so as Ruth passed up stairs with her charge, a little crowd collected on the steps and balcony in front, and in the avenue, to see the mystery of touching off the lights all previously prepared with some combustible fluid.

The babe had fallen asleep in Ruth's arms. She laid it on its little couch, and for a moment irresolutely fingered the costly clasps of gold. "Ha, ha—take off baby's slip—fold it carefully—put it in the gilt box—lay spices and myrrh between its folds," muttered Ruth, in mocking irony—"it cost forty pound, did it? I know what cost more than that—cost life—cost happiness in this world or the next—cost—but stop, that dreadful sound in my ears," she added, holding her hands to them—"let me see—shall I save it? No, no; let it be—let the gold be—let everything remain just as it is—it will cut all the keener."

Going to the door, she rang for a servant, requesting that if anybody spoke of the baby or wished to see it, to say that Lady Walden never allowed it to be disturbed—and to admit no one. The next thing she did was to write a short note, seal and superscribe it, and then she disappeared, returning with a bundle which she laid upon the floor, and sat herself down by the bedside of the unconscious babe.

"She wouldn't have slept so well," muttered the reckless girl, "if I had not given her the drops; it's a chance if she wakes up before to-morrow, after morning long enough." Again she was quiet, and anon muttering that the tide would run out fast enough by one—how it was the swiftest and strongest tide in the county.

The moon rose higher and poured its silvery rays into every nook and corner of the large room left in shadow by the subdued, half hidden light. It looked solemnly down upon the dark grove, and the liquid depths of the river. It brightened the distant hill-tops, and glided quietly into the green vallies to steal kisses from the coy lilies, leaning their fair cheeks against the moss. It spoke of peace—of a calm, holy serenity, that added to the swelling music, sending faint but distinct melody over all the

gentle scene, might have wakened in an innocent heart prayer, praise, and rapture. But Ruth sat brooding over thoughts congenial only to lost spirits. As the devotee of some revolting worship coolly maims himself to bring favor from his ghastly idol, so she to appease the growing hatred in her soul would fain plant the dagger of remorse, and bear forever after the horrible consciousness of a revolting sin, quieting conscience for the time by a false conviction that she could punish that crime which the world neither judged nor condemned—and feeling as if she should have the reward of heaven for the impious dealings.

It grew near the hour of twelve. She arose and opened the bundle, taking therefrom several articles and spreading them about. First, she rubbed a substance into her hair that gave it a silvery whiteness—then so transformed her face with careful limning and some sort of wash, that it soon resembled that of some poor old hag. She next fastened a miserable-looking cap under her chin—changed her garments for a tattered gown and skirt and much worn clogs—tied some gold in a little handkerchief and hid it about her person—and thus equipped took up the heavily sleeping child, whose face looked almost corpse-

like in the strong moonlight, and cautiously moving about opened a back door, and stealthily continued her winding way until she found herself by a low, open window reaching nearly to the ground. The revelry, if the enjoyment slightly partook of that character, was now going on within doors.

She sprang lightly out, took her way along a narrow path, and soon reached the edge of the river where a large pleasure boat was usually kept fastened to the bank. This she unloosed, kissed the babe passionately, laid a thick cloth in the bottom of the boat, placed the babe thereon, pushed the frail thing out into the stream, where the rapid current took it, and like a bird it shot away, and was darting down more swiftly than Ruth could think. For a moment the girl seemed overcome with horror after she had done the deed. She fell to the earth, and there laid in awful silence, while conscience knocked boldly at the door of her heart. But not long did she thus remain—she sprang wildly to her feet, lifted both hands and her white, ghastly face, exclaiming, “Rose, dear Rose, I did it for you—I *swore* he should suffer—and—I have kept my oath.”

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ELSIE'S WEDDING.

BY FANNIE MORETON.

"FATHER! dear father! 'Tis useless for you to urge me further. I have said it, and by my decision I shall abide."

"But, Elsie, why do you refuse him? You do not answer me that. Beside being wealthy and moving in the first circles, his personal appearance is all, I am sure, that even a *romantic* young lady would desire."

"Father, I repeat that it is useless. I do not love Albert McIntire, and without loving, I shall never marry. And papa," she continued, pleasantly, "what proof have you that all his statements are strictly true? Now you drive your daughter, your *only* daughter, to marry one that you know no more about than yonder straggling pedlar. Yet, understand me, even should he prove all that he represents himself to be, a wealthy Southern planter, I would not wed him."

"Elsie, you are proud, prejudiced, and self-willed. But mind," he added, as she turned tearfully to leave the room, "I do not consider your decision as by any means an irrevocable one, for I believe that Elsie Seymour will yet lay aside her childish prejudices and obey her father's will, ay! command."

A few hours later, and Elsie knelt by her bedside, weeping and praying; weeping over the fate assigned her by the stern, cruel-hearted old man, her father; and praying to know her duty. As if in answer to her prayer there comes forcibly to her mind the words of the first commandment of promise, "Honor thy father," &c.; and she rises pale and sorrow-stricken, but resolved, and she softly murmurs, "Thy will and his be done. Not mine, oh God!"

Time passed. It was a bright day in June. The doors of Seymour Hall were thrown open wide. The cars from the city that morning brought many gay, merry-hearted passengers to — station, and the carriages and stages there in waiting received an unusually liberal share of patronage. For two hours had guests been arriving at the hall; whilst a continual stream of fresh-silked, white-gloved, bejewelled ladies came tripping down the stairs from the dressing-rooms to the drawing-rooms below. White-vested gentlemen, with gold-headed canes and spotless cravats, thronged the piazza, watching the arrivals; while the more gallant remained

within doors, breathing soft nothings to the many bright young creatures there assembled, *en expectant*.

"Julia," said a young and fashionable married lady, who had come all the way from Newport to witness the marriage ceremony of her dear friend Elsie, "Julia, I wonder how many more are coming. I already see a 'goodlie number' of the Saratogaites, and have recognized no less than twenty of my acquaintances from Niagara. *Mais apropos*, as you are to be bridesmaid, I have a little favor to ask of you, my dear," she said, speaking low and holding a small jewel case in her hand, "I have brought a little gift for the bride from 'brother Charlie,' and as it would be very appropriate for her to wear this morning, I wish you would give it to her with the request, and also 'brother Charlie's' love and many kind, kind wishes for her welfare. Only see," she continued, ecstatically, "what good taste 'Charlie' has in selecting," at the same time she held up to Ellen Acton's view a necklace of the rarest workmanship, and fairly sparkling with diamonds. "Real Golcondas," as gay Lady M—— said with a smile and a look—almost of envy.

"Beautiful indeed," ejaculated Ellen; "how very elegant and *recherche*. I shall positively have to beg your 'darling brother Charlie' to choose my bridal jewels," she added, laughingly. "Why, my dear Mrs. M——, I would rather have this 'little love,' than that massive tea-service presented by Colonel W——, Elsie's uncle."

"It is indeed pretty," answered the other, "my own offering is so inferior in beauty that I hesitate to present it. But," she added, lightly, "I don't think 'brother Charlie' would have taken as much pains in selecting for any one else. I always half suspected that he entertained a sort of *penchant* for Elsie. What a sweet little sister-in-law she would have made!"

Suddenly the rustling of silks subsides, and the murmur of voices is hushed. The minister rises, with the book of prayer open in his hand. The doors opening to the conservatory, and which had been hitherto closed, are suddenly thrown open, and the bride enters, gracefully, yet with a firm step, leaning on the arm of her future husband.

The bridal robe is stiff with richness, and the

veil of costliest honiton floats around her like a mist wreath. Her costume is allowed even by the most fastidious to be *comme il faut*. But oh! mookery! Ye eager gazers, and gay, heartless butterflies of fashion, ye see not the heart that beats beneath. All is fair on the outside, and that is all *you* think of, look, or care for.

But gaze upon that "death white countenance" with an earnest, truthful eye, and ye will then see that the lovely bride is but a living picture, one that we daily meet in our walks, a "gilded misery."

The responses come low and fluttering to her lips, and are heard not by the "lookers on," who are indeed more taken up with criticising her dress or conjecturing the price of the bridal veil. On Elsie's rounded arm there glitters in the sunlight that comes stealing in, as if to mock her sadness, through the half-closed blinds, a costly diamond bracelet, the gift of him she loathes, and yet has but just sworn to "honor and obey." And little Mrs. M—— is in ecstasies to see her brother's gift where she had designed it to be placed. That was to Elsie a *dear* gift, indeed, and as she receives with queenly grace the congratulations of her friends, she gazes round in search of the giver. In vain!

"No," his sister says that "he exceedingly regretted a prior engagement." But Elsie knows full well *why* he is not there.

"Give him my heartfelt thanks, dear Mrs. M——," she says, "tell him not to forget to call when——" but she could not finish the sentence.

"Certainly, my dear," said the other gaily and aloud. "Take care of yourself. I shall see you on your return in the fall. Give me a 'bridal kiss,' you know, and another for 'brother

Charlie;' for I fear," she added, in a lower and more serious tone, "you have quite broken his heart, Elsie! Good-bye, love. Others are waiting to salute the bride, and I fear I am even now too late for this train of cars."

"She is a jewel, guard her well," was her parting salutation, as she shook hands with the triumphant bridegroom.

Elsie's proud father's heart was satisfied. But as the solemn words of the marriage service fell upon his ear, he remembered the tones of her voice as she had said but a few months since,

"I do not love Albert McIntire, and without loving I shall never marry."

But such scenes are almost daily transpiring. It was but another sacrifice offered up at the altar of Mammon.

And was Elsie Seymour's wedded life a happy one? The answer is brief.

In two years she returned to that mansion which she had left in all the pomp of splendor. She came back heart-broken and crushed in spirit—and alone. Elsie having many influential friends, soon obtained a divorce from her husband, for she had already learned that he had one wife living in Italy.

Not many years after, dear reader, Elsie was again a bride. But her wedding was not surrounded by the eclat that characterized her first one. Oh, no; habited in a neat travelling dress, and becoming bonnet, with her now loved husband, and his sister, Mrs. M——, as her only bridesmaid, with a shade or two deeper on her pure brow, but with a happy heart, Elsie's vows were spoken with a calm, truthful voice, and unflinching tongue.

MY CASTLE IN THE AIR.

WRITTEN IN A TRANCE.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

Nobody came, to begin with.

It was a rainy day in the country; and, without, the only view was comprised in an unbroken line of storm-beaten lawn, and trees and shrubs that were swaying about as though stricken with the palsy. Heavy drops came pattering on the window-panes—the birds had stopped singing—and the voice of the storm seemed likely to drown every other sound.

What mattered it that I was dressed in my rose-colored muslin, that looked like a floating cloud at sunset? Or that the rosettes on my slippers were a theme of never-ceasing admiration? What mattered it if I *were* young and gay? I might as well have been ninety as nineteen!

How vainly I stretched my eyes over hill and dale for the faintest shadow of saddle or bridle, and what a delicious vision would have been the sight even of James' eternal horsemen! But visitors, alas! were not to be had when our need was the sorest; and, in no very amiable mood, I joined the party at the dinner-table.

All were convinced that just the thing they didn't happen to have was the one most earnestly to be desired. "I really wish," said somebody, "that the mails would arrive! It is high time." I wished, too, that the *males* would arrive—but I was wise enough to "let concealment, &c." They would have hailed the unlucky speech that I was about to make as a target for all the arrows of wit that the afternoon might call forth.

I sank idly into an arm-chair with the conviction that this was a wretched world—yes, it was, indeed, for no one cared enough about us to venture forth on a rainy day. I called to mind the most disagreeable people that I knew; all the acts of meanness, selfishness, and violence that I had known them to be guilty of; and I consoled myself with thinking that I was just thrown away upon so wicked a world.

"Let me show you another," said a voice at my elbow.

I started, but 'could see no one; the shadows of twilight had gathered around, yet I felt convinced of a presence in the room that brought a certain degree of awe that was not exactly fear.

The gentleman, who, after saying, "May the evil one take me!" on some trivial occasion, beheld his Satanic majesty ready to avail himself of the offer, could scarcely have been more astonished than I.

"Look," said the voice, and, swaying to and fro above me, I saw an extensive building, that seemed filled with people.

"In consideration of your uncommon excellence," continued my visitor, and here the voice was the least bit sarcastic, "you have been presented with this castle, which is, in fact, a sort of floating world. You will find it already peopled with companions exactly after your own heart—and you are requested to take up your residence there, and enjoy yourself."

I gazed up at my future dwelling in some astonishment; but no Jacob's ladder was obligingly unfolded, and I began to fear that I might not be able to get into my own house. But as I stood gazing upon it, it seemed nearer; and, finally, I approached the entrance, and found myself inside.

"A choice five hundred friends" had already flocked to share my prosperity, and evidently belonged to the class who "will not stand upon ceremony;" for, rather to my surprise, they were already established there. At the first glance, they seemed to belong to the Harold Skimpole order, who asked from the world nothing but a living; for the first story of my capacious mansion was quite taken up by people of different callings.

The first apartment that I entered was a dress-maker's studio; and the presiding goddess of the establishment was measuring off a piece of rich silk.

"Madam," said she, to her elegantly dressed customer, "you have two yards more than is sufficient."

Could I believe my own ears? Did her children happen not to want aprons, just then? Or had the entire edition of dressmakers been revised and corrected?

The dress was promised in the course of a week; and looking into a wonderful mirror, that seemed placed there for the purpose, I saw the

incidents of that day-week, and beheld the dressmaker's apprentice carrying home that identical dress fully completed!

There were several ladies seated around the room; and some were speaking of a contemplated wedding. The bride, in this case, was much younger than the bridegroom—she was poor, and he rich; yet, no one spoke of “a sacrifice”—no one mentioned “a daguerreotype of a handsome young man found in one of her dreams”—or said that the elderly suitor had, probably, been the death of his first wife. The course of true love was, for once, allowed to run smooth; and the fashionable dressmaker exhibited the lady's elegant dresses without a single insinuation that they were presents from her future husband.

I began to think that I must be larger than I supposed, or else Mrs. Snip would not have consumed so much material in making my dresses; for as to *suspecting* her, after what I had seen, perish the thought as unworthy both of her and of me!

Passing from this apartment, I was modestly accosted by a beggar. The woman scarcely raised her eyes; and did not even say that she had “four children!” There was no diminutive mass of rags and dirt in her arms; and she neither blessed me nor called me “a lovely lady.”

Wishing to try her, I pretended to pass on; but she did not try to stop me, and I came back to her again.

“Why do you not use more importunity?” I asked, “you will never succeed, at this rate.”

She looked at me in surprise. “I have no right to do that,” she replied, “if you choose to give me anything, I receive it as a great kindness—if not, can you not do as you please with your own?”

I gave her some silver; but, instead of kissing my hand and breaking forth into ecstasies of gratitude, she said, in a tone of deep feeling,

“You will be rewarded for this more than I can thank you,” and was lost amid the crowd.

The next room seemed to contain a sick person; for the windows were shaded, and the sound of steps was low and gentle.

A melancholy-looking man, whose face seemed to shadow forth all the scenes of suffering through which he had passed, was slowly counting the pulse of the invalid. She was quite a young-looking woman, in the last stage of consumption, and was now evidently dying.

Suddenly, the doctor fainted and fell heavily to the floor. “There is, then, no hope!” said the sufferer; and, soon, she had ceased to breathe.

I scarcely knew what to think at this unlooked-for result in my ordering of things. It was certainly more agreeable to be attended by a doctor whose heart did not seem made of iron—but, then, was it not more satisfactory to be alive?

When the fainting doctor recovered his sensibility, he delicately departed from the house of mourning; and, although rather suffering for want of cash, he scorned the idea of sending in his bill. The consequence was that the large property of the deceased went to distant relations, and the doctor's landlady, a poor widow, was minus her rent. All this the mirror showed me; but I rather inclined toward that doctor, and would, probably, have bestowed a professorship upon him, if possible. As Mrs. Skewerton says, he was “all heart.”

I then found myself in a court-room; and one of the most eloquent lawyers of the day was pleading in behalf of a client whose appearance was, to say the least of it, threadbare. There was a certain dignity, though, about the man, and a look as if he had seen better days.

Opposite, was seated a handsome man, with a very bad expression, whose face spoke of triumphant wickedness. He seemed certain of gaining his end, which was that of defrauding his poor relation out of a large property to which he was the rightful heir; but from that lawyer's lips their gushed a stream of eloquence more powerful than the thunderbolts of Jupiter.

The villain fairly writhed as he saw his own hideous effigy held up before the public, and unmercifully lashed by those quickly falling strokes of wit. Evanescent as the sea-foam—brilliant as the diamond's glow—with a rich undertone of thought, like deep church music, was the mind that thus shone forth in behalf of the right; and the noble brow contracted, and the flashing eyes wore a yet fiercer light, when he spoke of the *gold* that had been offered him to pervert his eloquence for the *wrong*. Oh! how like a god he stood there! Towering in his perfect manhood, above the abject creature who had sought to sully it with an insulting *bribe*.

At length, breathless and exhausted, he sank into a seat; and the walls fairly shook with the plaudits of that hitherto spell-bound multitude. The defrauder was turned from the room with execrations; and he of the threadbare coat was elevated to the highest place, for had he not, now, plenty of money to buy another?

I sighed involuntarily, when I heard that the lawyer was married; and wished that people's eyes were not quite so wide open to the value of precious things.

In the course of my wanderings, I stumbled, most unexpectedly, upon a love scene. It was impossible to retreat; so I concealed myself behind some drapery.

"Dearest," said the young man, "your father has, most unaccountably, imbibed a prejudice against me—but I will trust to time to alter his feelings. I do not even ask you to meet me, if it has been forbidden by him."

A pair of soft, eloquent eyes were turned upon the speaker.

"Thanks," she murmured, "for sparing me this temptation! I hope that I should not have swerved from the path of duty—but, with *that* drawback, the straight and narrow road would have seemed harder to travel."

Here, the sudden appearance of a grey-haired man afforded me some relief; for he, too, then, had been listening.

"My children," said he, enfolding them both, "you have conquered!—you are worthy of each other."

While rejoicing in the happiness of the lovers, I could not help calling to mind the good, little boy who always preferred learning a hymn to eating gingerbread. "When he makes this reply," added the proud father, "I always give him a double allowance of cake." How was it with the inmates of my castle? Did they not get a double allowance of sweets?

I was next introduced into the presence of a husband and wife.

The husband had grey hair; but the lady's was a bright brown, and she was evidently much his junior.

He appeared to be making his will.

"My dear," said he, "you will, of course, survive me many years, and I shall leave you the entire control of my property."

"Will that be quite right," she whispered, "thus to cut off your numerous relations? I cannot use it all."

"Quite right," he replied, "they wished me, Ada, to put in a clause that, if you marry again, you forfeit half the estate—but I shall not heed them. Ours has been the union of a rose-bud and a stricken tree—and it is not natural that you should *always* cherish the memory of an old man."

The lady's full lip quivered, and she burst into tears. The next moment, she was kneeling beside him, while he stroked her soft hair with a caressing motion.

"Did I not," she whispered, "of my own free will, become an old man's darling? Did I not the more treasure and prize my jewel because the casket was shattered? And will not the blow that separates us strike home to *my* heart, also?"

I looked in the mirror and beheld the scenes of after years. The old man was in his grave; but the sweet, young wife went about, in her dark, mourning robes, with a great grief at her heart that soon bore her down to the earth to rest beside him.

After passing a variety of other excellent people, and finding, to my great delight, that the world was just as I would have arranged it, I was, at least, fortunate enough to meet with one whom I considered worthy of so great a treasure as myself.

This was the very piece of living mosaic whom I had so many times constructed of the best parts of desirable characters; and the actual, breathing illustration of all those bright-hued dreams was a sight grand, sublime, elevating. I examined my hero from every point of view; I scanned most narrowly this perfect work; but "finishing touches," *here*, would have been "gilding refined gold."

Yes, I was quite satisfied, and ready to express my approbation; but I was soon in possession of the rather mortifying fact that this noble being, whom I had so often created in my own mind, could not bring himself to stoop to one so imperfect as myself. I had altered the world, to be sure; but, as I remained the same, as ever, the world altogether declined the pleasure of my acquaintance!

This was decidedly unpleasant; and I was only relieved from the dilemma by awaking to find that an individual, who was not even a distant relation of "nature's nobleman," had been enjoying a most "open view" of me, (my mouth being far from closed) and my castle in the air vanished as unceremoniously as Aladdin's palace.

ANGLING FOR A GOLD-FISH; OR, WALLS HAVE EARS.

BY SUSIE CREIGHTON.

VERILY life at Newport is a great sea, wherein there swimmeth many fish. And on its shores sit patiently, anglers, both male and female, with baited hooks, wherewith each hopeth to entrap the fish that pleaseth them best. Many and divers are the devices in use; some do angle with a subtle thing called beauty, others with that shadowy substance, a title, and others again with a curious compound of love, moonshine, zephyrs and smoke, which with a certain kind of fish hath been found to be successful. But that bait which entrappeth most of all, is a yellow substance, hard and glittering; such magic power hath it, that no sooner is it let fall into this sea, than what pushing, and struggling, and snapping succeedeth, each endeavoring to jostle aside his fellow and obtain it for himself. Beside these anglers sit various others, who having obtained their desire, do angle no more, but employ themselves in instructing others of less experience, as to how, when the fish is almost caught, they may snatch up their line in order that their final success may be more certain, together with divers other manœuvres of like nature. And much amusement doth it afford to those who walk up and down upon the shores of this sea, to watch the funny tribes that do sport therein, and the various successes and disappointments which befall they that angle for them. But I have to tell of one of the various puppet-shows, whose puppets were the anglers and the fish I have been telling of. So let us tinkle the bell, draw up the curtain, call out the actors, and watch the progress of the show.

Scene first—Ball-room of the Ocean House, at Newport. "Who is that rather foolish-looking young man with reddish hair and light blue eyes standing near the door?" inquired Miss Laura Bryant of one of the numerous gentlemen-butterflies that were fluttering around her.

"Don't know him? Why, I thought every young lady in the Ocean knew Augustus F. Baitbrook by this time 'Pon honor, greatest catch up here, casts us poor fellows quite in the shade. Worth seven or eight thousand a year, if he's worth a cent."

By a strange coincidence, a moment afterward

Augustus Frederic Baitbrook (he prided himself upon his name, and always wrote it in full,) turned around to his friend the ex-American consul of Tripoli, and asked, "Say, Tripoli," (he always gave the consul this name, perhaps to keep himself in mind of what a fortunate individual he was to have for his particular friend, so important a personage as the ex-American consul of Tripoli, for Augustus Frederic shared the fondness of we republicans for titles, the longer the better.) "Say, Tripoli, who is that splendid looking girl opposite in pink, with such magnificent eyes? The little German count is fanning her."

"That," said the consul, slowly turning round his seal ring, either to admire it, or the hand it adorned. "That is Laura Bryant, a very nice little girl. Not to know her is to argue oneself unknown."

"Of course you are acquainted with her."

"Well."

"Introduce me, then." And Miss Laura Bryant and Mr. Augustus F. Baitbrook were introduced. And between sundry glasses of champagne, and the bewildering glances shot out from the great sparkling eyes of Miss Bryant, it will not be a matter of astonishment that our hero retired from the ball-room in a lamentable state of confusion. The next morning the impression made upon his heart the previous evening, might have been inferred by the difficulty Mr. A. F. Baitbrook found in making any progress toward the completion of his toilet. First arose the important question—how should he dispose of his luxuriant hair, the pride of his heart, in the most irresistible manner. The style sentimental was first essayed, which, (by way of explanation to those who are not *au fait* in this department,) is produced by disposing the front locks in graceful curls, and allowing the back hair to remain in careless flowing waves. But, unfortunately for all romantic purposes, Augustus Frederic's hair had not the slightest tendency to a curve, much less to a curl, and after various vain attempts, the style sentimental was relinquished as impracticable. Then he tried the style poetical, that is, he endeavored

to induce his pet possession to stand on end in a formidable phalanx above his forehead, but unfortunately again the last-mentioned member being neither very high, nor very broad, he was again defeated. This question, however, being finally settled to his satisfaction, he at length arrived at that stage in his proceeding where the momentous question of what cravat he should stifle himself with, must be decided. Oh! pity him, ye cravat wearers, who have been placed in a similar dilemma. Poor Augustus Frederic arranged these articles before him, and their number was by no means small, and then proceeded to make his decision. What color *did* Miss Bryant admire most? In vain he racked his brain for an answer, he had not heard her express an opinion! Despair! there was the gong. In a fit of desperation, Augustus Frederic seized upon a blue cause of his dilemma, and when on going down to breakfast, he raised his eyes from his first cup of Mocha, and beheld charming Miss Laura gliding gracefully down between the tables attired in a breakfast robe of the most ethereal heavenly blue, the happiness of Augustus Frederic Baitbrook was complete. That same day he led Miss Bryant into dinner triumphantly, thinking that even the ex-American consul of Tripoli might envy him.

Now every man has his hobby, and that of Augustus Frederic was the art piscatory, and everything appertaining thereto. He could construct at least a dozen artificial flies upon the most approved scientific principles, but strange to say, and much to the consternation of the amateur angler, the "finny prey" paid the poor compliment to his skill of invariably rejecting with disdain all the capitulations for enveigling them, in the shape of flies, or anything else manufactured by the disappointed votary of hook and line, after much toil and tribulation. And notwithstanding Augustus Frederic was nothing of a book worm, he had all the arguments of dear old Izaak Walton (heaven bless him) in favor of angling, by heart. But what connection has all this with the simple fact of a gentleman leading a lady into dinner? ask you. I will tell you, impatient reader. Although the heart of Augustus Frederic had been violently besieged and almost taken by storm, it had not yet entirely succumbed, and it was while engaged in his favorite pursuit that its conquest was to be completed. The event took place in this wise. Upon seating himself beside Miss Bryant, Augustus Frederic, as was perhaps natural under the circumstances, felt somewhat embarrassed, and having exhausted that prolific topic the weather, was at loss what to begin upon next; for with all

his seven or eight thousand a-year, and although he was a young man, living in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-three, (dear reader, *please* believe me) A. F. Baitbrook was a little troubled with bashfulness. The pause grew longer. Augustus Frederic knew that his fair neighbor expected to say something; notwithstanding this, he was fast arriving at that delightful stage when one feels as if one would gladly tear every hair out of one's head, if by such a proceeding each hair would only be metamorphosed into a word. Suddenly the eye of Augustus Frederic fell upon a baked blackfish extended near him. Oh, happy thought! words came, and he asked, did Miss Bryant fish? No, Miss Bryant did not, but she would so like to learn. Might he have the pleasure of teaching her? Oh, that would be delightful, it must be such a *captivating* pursuit.

"Not always, anglers were often obliged to return without a single *captive* to recompense them for their toil." And Augustus Frederic laughed at his play upon the word, congratulating himself upon such a fine stroke of wit, and perhaps it was, for a Newport gentleman of leisure, with more money than brains, and more time hanging a dead weight upon his hands than either: these sapient youths generally possessing sufficient wit to keep out of the rain, and tie a cravat in imitation of the Newport D'Orsay, who then happened to be the ex-American consul of Tripoli, who possessed the last accomplishment in perfection, having given his whole mind to it, thereby elevating himself to the highest pinnacle of regard in our hero's estimation. As was remarked before, Augustus Frederic laughed at his remarkably felicitous hit. His laugh was echoed by Miss Bryant, who thereby displayed the most perfect set of teeth imaginable. Now what man does not like to have what he considers his "good things" appreciated? What ever influence this might have had upon Augustus Frederic, he rose from the table secretly thinking Miss Bryant the most charming girl he had ever seen, but still his heart remained in his own possession. It was finally determined that on the morrow Augustus Frederic should have the happiness of giving Miss Bryant her first lesson in the time-honored art of angling. So the next day, teacher and pupil departed upon their excursion. I shall not take time to describe the pretty little time Miss Laura made about getting into the fishing boat, and how charmingly confused she was at being obliged to give Mr. Baitbrook both her hands in order that he might assist her in. Nor what fascinating little ways she had with her. How, once, for instance, she took off her gloves, thereby displaying a pair of

gleaming white hands, sparkling with rings, bashfully inquiring if Mr. Baitbrook didn't think them dreadfully tanned. Upon which the gentleman thus solicited, gazing admiringly upon the digits in question, gallantly assured the owner of them, that snow could not be whiter. In return for this reply, Miss Laura would have tapped him with her fan, had it been in her possession, as it was she contented herself with performing the operation mentally, and exclaiming, "Oh, you flatterer," much to the delight of the individual thus addressed, for what gentleman is there that objects to being called a flatterer by a lady. But I loiter by the way. After declaring many times that she could never, never have the heart to catch those darling little fish, with Mr. Baitbrook's assistance, Miss Laura at length managed to drop her line into the water, and after some timorous little shrieking whenever it was suddenly pulled from below, triumphantly drew out (with the assistance of Mr. Baitbrook) a fish about four inches in length, denominated, in Newport parlance, a "porgie," and the same hook by which the weighty capture was ensnared, held suspended upon it the heart of Augustus Frederic Baitbrook, which article was laid at Miss Laura Bryant's feet in company with her first "porgie." So that day passed away charmingly, and others still more charming followed. Did Miss Laura walk, Mr. Baitbrook was by her side. Did she dance, Mr. Baitbrook was her partner. Did she ride, it was in the lightest of wagons with the gayest red wheels imaginable, its happy possessor, A. F. Baitbrook, triumphantly seated by her side. The fast young men at the "Ocean" nodded their heads significantly at each other, and whispered among themselves that "Gus was fast hooked at last." Ah, they had forgotten that the fish which after much wit and trouble seems at length securely hooked, and is nearly landed high and dry upon the bank, may from some sudden and unforeseen cause, make its escape back into its native element, leaving the chagrined and disappointed angler in a state of blank bewilderment upon the shore.

But now the Newport season was drawing to a close, and the fancy ball looked forward to with such anxious expectation by all the Newport habitues, approached, for the reader must remember it is of Newport and its fancy ball of a year ago that I speak, not of the grand apology for the latter of last season. And now costumes and *friseurs* began to multiply upon the field of action, fair brows were clouded with anxiety, it was so very difficult to decide upon so important a matter as the choice of a costume in the midst

of such a variety, and the dowager mammas held consultations among themselves, each anxious that her own dear Josephine Henrietta, or Victoria Louisa, should appear to the best advantage. Nearer drew the night of the wished-for event, and now the shade was lifted from the fair brows of all, save an unhappy few, whose minds were yet vacillating between the various characters and costumes that fancy held up to their doubting view. So the principal business of Newport life, flirting, and eating, and dressing, went on; the ladies relieved from their temporary anxiety, attired themselves more gaily than ever. There was dressing for breakfast, and dinner, and tea, and supper; there was dressing to ride, and dressing to walk, and dressing to bathe. I wonder if the fair ones ever once thought of the lilies, but, I doubt it, and amidst all the arraying of themselves, the night of the fancy ball arrived.

"To-night decides my destiny," soliloquized Augustus Frederic in the privacy of his own room; "this very evening will I ask Laura Bryant to marry me," and standing in a meditative attitude before the glass, he considered in what form the proposal should be made. He would lead his heart's adored away from the glare and heat of the ball-room, they would stand together beneath the stars, (if it was a clear night) and he would say to her, "Dear Miss Bryant"—no that was cold, "Dear Miss Laura," that wouldn't do, either; "Dearest and most adorable Miss Laura, if so I may be permitted"—Augustus Frederic had just reached this point in his proposal, when suddenly preceding from the next room, through the thin, paper-like partition, which for all purposes of stifling sound, might almost as well have been dispensed with, he heard a voice. It could not be! No! Yes, it was, it did belong to the charming, the refined, the elegant Miss Laura Bryant. But no longer soft and syrenic in its tones, but shrilly, piercingly it fell upon the shocked ear of Augustus Frederic. "Oh, you good-for-nothing careless, clumsy"—(and here followed some names which I would rather not record) "how dare you burn my cheek with those horrid curling irons." (So those beautiful ringlets were the result of curling irons) thought Augustus Frederic. There was no doubt of it, Miss Laura Bryant, she who never spoke but in the lowest, sweetest tones imaginable, was scolding loudly and furiously her French waiting-maid, Marie, and that too in terms that were better suited to the vocabulary of a fishwoman, than that of a young lady belonging to the so-called upper tendom. And yet, Augustus Frederic *might* have forgiven this, he

might have remembered that being burnt was not the pleasantest sensation imaginable, and sundry reminiscences presented themselves to his mind of various bootjacks, and other implements of warfare projected at the head of some offending *valet*. As I have said, Augustus Frederic might have remembered all this, and forgiven and excused the fair fury, for he really did love Miss Bryant, not for her beauty alone, but for her fancied amiability, her seeming affability to all around her, and he, though rather weak, and perhaps a little foolish, had by no means a bad heart, in which was enshrined the model of the woman that should be his wife. She should be beautiful and gentle, and low-voiced, (Augustus Frederic had a horror of loud voices in women) in short, everything that was good and lovely, and was not Miss Bryant all this? So he believed until now. Even yet this belief was not entirely dispelled, and his disenchantment and discomfiture were yet to be completed.

In the midst of the tumult caused by Miss Laura's scolding, and the shrill, voluble replies of the little French waiting-maid, the rustling of silks was heard, and a voice which Augustus Frederic knew to be that of Miss Bryant's mamma, said,

"Laura, tell Ma—— what d'y'e call her, to go away, I want to talk with you," and then he heard the door slam, and Marie chattering to herself in the entry about "de horrid awful temper of mam'selle."

"Now, Laura," went on the voice of Laura's mamma, "I think it is high time that affairs between you and that young Baitbrook resulted in something, for you know we have not much longer to stay here, and I only hired that Mary, as you call her, for the time we were to be at Newport, for I wasn't going to have you put down by those odious, ugly Mrs. Parkman's daughters with their fine French maid. And you must remember, too, that this is your second season, and some people, envious creatures, will want to be putting you on the shelf."

"Don't be a fool, ma," was the dutiful response, "do you suppose I've been with the man on his horrid fishing parties, and spoilt and bedraggled my dress, catching those wretched dirty little fish for nothing?"

Augustus Frederic stared with astonishment at hearing his favorite pursuit thus traduced by one who had vowed it the most charming employment imaginable.

"No, indeed," went on Miss Laura, "don't worry yourself, ma, of course he'll propose, and I'll be willing to venture this very night, too. I

know he was going to-day, but some horrid people came in and interrupted us. One comfort is, if I do marry him, he's such a fool that he'll be easy to manage."

Augustus Frederic felt as if a shower of ice water had been precipitated both upon him and the love that was glowing in his heart, extinguishing it utterly. What man ever swallowed with complacency the bitter pill of being termed a fool; that was indeed the climax of his discomfiture, exceeding even the attack upon his beloved piscatory art.

"Well, that's right, child," rejoined Miss Laura's mamma, in an approving tone, in reply to the young lady's last elegant retort. "You'll be riding in your carriage soon, and that's more than that Mrs. Parkman's Henrietta Antoinette, or Victoria Heloise will ever come to, with all their fine names. Now, hurry and get dressed, I want to see how vexed they'll be when they see that new set of pearls," and the door closed behind the rustling silks, leaving Augustus Frederic in a state of astonishment, consternation and wrath, that defies description.

The ball-room was filling fast. What a scene of gayety, confusion and splendor. Here fairies were fitting about, whose little feet seemed only fitted to twinkle in a merry dance over the greensward. There simpered shepherdesses so very naturally, they seemed to have just stepped down from out those ancient pictures (the wonderments of my childhood) that always represent blue-eyed, pink cheeked damsels, seated in impossible attitudes, tending impossible snow white flocks of sheep, while maids of honor, sultinas and cavaliers, Mary Stuarts, Romeos and Juliets, were all blended together in picturesque and amicable confusion. But now gracefully glided into the room Miss Laura Bryant, attired as Aurora. The many-hued, cloud-like robe floated around her with undulating grace. Stars, goldenly gleaming, shone out from her dark hair, and pearls rested upon a breast, whiter, more softly gleaming, than they. Her splendid eyes shone with the anticipation of her coming triumph, as if all the light in the room had in them found its focus, and as Augustus Frederic gazed at her, for a moment, all that had passed seemed like a dream. Could those red lips, wreathed with smiles, ever speak any but the softest, gentlest words imaginable? Suddenly the words, "One comfort, if I do marry him, the man is such a fool he'll be easy to manage," rang in his ear with startling bitterness, and he turned away from the contemplation of the mist-robed, pearl-bedecked beauty, with an expression in his face that very much resembled disgust.

In one corner of the ball-room sat Miss Bryant's white-plumed dowager mamma, side by side with the beforementioned "odious Mrs. Parkman," whose head also rejoiced in the waving glories of black ostrich feathers.

"I have heard that Mr. Baitbrook is a very dissipated young man. I am glad he never paid any attention to *my* daughters," said the owner of the black plumes, that nodded in approval.

"Oh, yes, we are very glad." But for all that, the white plumes knew very well that the black plumes would have been well pleased to have had that "dissipated young man for a husband for her dear Henrietta Antoinette, or Victoria Heloise."

But in the meantime Miss Laura wondered exceedingly why Augustus Frederic went on polkaing with the fairies, and flirting with the sultanas, instead of occupying his accustomed place by her side. But presently she thought, "Ah! he is waiting to get an opportunity to speak to me alone;" and shortly, by accident, of course, she found herself in one of the convenient little recesses so *apropos* for flirtations, and other ball-room affairs, and she was not very much surprised when a few moments afterward she saw Augustus Frederic making his way toward her.

"Good evening, Miss Bryant."

"Good evening, Mr. Baitbrook," on the part of the gentleman, coldly, on that of the lady spoken with a reproachful tenderness.

"I have come to say, Miss Bryant, (Miss Laura's heart beat high, and she completed the sentence mentally, "how very much I love you,") how very much," the gentleman went on in a significant, deliberate tone, "it is to be regretted that the fish Miss Bryant so successfully angled for, and so nearly secured, should have escaped. This, however, is not to be so much lamented, as it was the golden glitter alone of its scales that attracted her attention, and made her anxious for its capture. Another time perhaps Miss Bryant will do well to remember also *that walls have ears*."

A looker-on would not have seen the connection between the first and last part of the sen-

tence, but *we* do, reader. While Augustus Frederic spoke, a deep burning blush overspread Miss Laura's fair white neck: even her arms were tinged with the same glowing hue, showing exclusively that even a belle of two seasons may blush—*under circumstances*. So deeply crimson, so widely suffused was this blush, that it even reached her plumed mamma in her far-off corner, and exultingly she pointed out to the owner of the black plumes beside her, its obvious connection with Mr. Baitbrook, while her own white ones nodded joyfully, "We shall see what we shall see." And the black plumes nodded angrily back, "What care we for your daughter's blushes, or what care we if she does marry that dissipated young man, who never paid any attention to our dear Henrietta Antoinette, or Victoria Heloise."

While Augustus Frederic had been speaking, and now as he passed on with a graceful bow, (deep feeling will often render a man graceful) there was a dignity and manliness about him that even Miss Laura felt, and found time amid all her consternation, and blushes, and mortification, to express to herself by saying, "He is not quite such a fool as I thought for."

The next morning the same steamboat that left behind it the fog-bound shores of Newport, carried with it Augustus Frederic Baitbrook, perchance a trifle wiser than when six weeks before, puffing and blowing, it landed him in the midst of the same dreary, grey, dense mist, that seemed as if it might have been the collection of the puffings of endless steamboats settled in one mass. Of course it was reported that Mr. Baitbrook had proposed, and had been refused by Miss Laura Bryant, who, of course, made every effort in her power to contradict the report. And so Miss Bryant was a greater belle than ever. But, strange to say, however it was, anything connected in the slightest degree with fish, angling, anglers, or the piscatory art in general, was never mentioned in her presence, without bringing to her cheek the reflection of that same burning blush, by which it had once before been crimsoned.

JENNY AND IDA'S NEW YEAR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CHAPTER I.

WHEN the old year turns his back to go, and we see the white locks lying upon the bowed shoulders, we keep our eyes, in which the tears are fast gathering, upon him. We say to him, "Thou dear Old Year! thou art going. But, before thou goest, we will say to thee that we love thee. Thou hast laid thy hand upon us more than once, and the sharp pain, the long time of weariness have come. Thou hast taken away out of our sight some that we loved as we did our own flesh, to lay them under the immovable sod. Thou hast often kept us watching and waiting, and still didst not grant us our desire. But out of all the pain, the tearful partings, the deferred wishes, didst thou beneficently and with a wisdom far better than our own, bring us farther and farther into a life weaned from the earth that fadeth, a life devoted with quiet love, quiet faith and quiet energies to heaven; to the growth and steady preparation of the soul for God's fit dwelling-place.

"Thus, of all thou hast done, thou hast, in all thy time, done nothing in vain. And now, in the solemn hour when we are parting forever, we bow down before thee and God; saying, reverently, to thee, 'Good Old Year, thou art gone! We see thee no more!' to Him, 'Father, in this hour, let us come closer than ever before to Thee and take Thy hand, that Thou mayest lead us to meet the unknown that cometh, the strong, the hale New Year.'"

Somewhat like this the good Jenny Overn thought and felt, in the last night of the year, as with her head bowed low on her hand, she sat in her chamber alone, listening to hear the town clocks striking the hour of midnight.

Her father had died in the year that was ending; in the early harvest-time of his life, when the fruits of his active labors in his fields and his store-houses, were already plentifully laid up for him, when his fellow-citizens were honoring him, and when his wife and daughter, the one in part blossoming, the other in ripened womanhood, were beside him, the crowning beauty and delight of his daily life; and, moreover, when one plan, the dearest and the longest cherished of his whole life, was, as he hoped, tending toward a consummation. For young

Ward was soon coming from his long sojourn in other lands; coming, as Mr. Overn was sure, before he sent him, that he would do, ripe in knowledge, in every manly attribute and grace; worthy to be the husband of his child, able to keep her through all her days close by the still waters of life.

CHAPTER II.

HENRY WARD was a widow's son, and poor. As a boy, he was the quietest, noblest little fellow; and this it was that made him Mr. Overn's favorite.

Mr. Overn was never the man to make any loud demonstrations of his favoritism; Henry was not the boy to whom a person of tact would make such demonstrations, whatever his habit in this respect might be. He used simply to put his hand often on Henry's head and to look down on him with a great deal of unmistakable kindness and affection on his features; Henry used simply to look up with the rosiest, best face in the world and smile. By-and-bye, without speaking of it at all beforehand to Henry, or his mother, (he had heard Mrs. Ward say to his wife, though, that she regretted her inability to give Henry an education, he longed for it so much) Mr. Overn sent this note in to Mrs. Ward:

"DEAR MADAM—I send this money to pay Henry's expenses at the academy this term. I shall send an equal sum every term until he is ready for college, if the Great Master spares him and me.

H. OVERN."

No word touching the matter passed between Mr. Overn and Henry. But they loved each other better; came oftener together; not so much to talk of a hundred matters, as people are wont in their meetings, as to feel in their quiet way how dear they were to each other and always would be, how much they were worth to each other and always would be; to have the tears gather in their eyes while they thought about it; tears of gratitude; of gratitude as strong on Mr. Overn's part as on Henry's; for, in this instance, was the generous kindness indeed "twice blest;" blest quite as much in him that gave as in him that took.

The same noble relation subsisted between them through Henry's time at college, (where Mr. Overn kept him) and after them Henry went abroad because both he and Mr. Overn felt it essential to the rounding and finishing of his learning and his manhood; and because he *longed* to go as the *true* artist longs for beauty. It was not the restless longing that tears and perpetually disquiets the soul; that, loathing its past and its present, flies with morbid eagerness to its future. Henry Ward loved his past dearly and was grateful to it. His present, in which he looked with a clear, strong vision, both backward and forward, was richer and dearer than his past; and his future, to whose use he would bring all his acquirements, all his grateful affection, seemed to him richest and best of all; as the time when he would look with a crowning reverence to God and into his own soul, saying within himself, "God, thou art good! Soul, thou image of the Most High, do thou ever be worthy of Him and of the eternal life with Him that He hath given thee!"

Both Mr. Overn and Henry wished also to have the methods, principles and theories of the Old World agriculturists, vine-dressers, and of the agricultural departments of the schools and colleges at their use; for, by the time Henry returned, Mr. Overn would finally have closed his mercantile life, and be ready for his beautiful fields; ready to make them, in time and with Henry's co-operation, so beautiful with blossoms, fruit and far-sweeping vines that every one who saw should, in a way, be enriched and made the happier for seeing. Both had visions of beautiful flowers, fruit and vegetables distributed with no niggardly hands to those who had none, and no spot on which to raise them; and visions of their neighbors who had lands, at work turning them, as he and Henry were doing, into new beauty. And into better means of profit too.

CHAPTER III.

BUT the Master had need of Mr. Overn and *did* call him away. The summons was delayed, however, after many premonitions, so that he had time to look about him and put all his affairs well in order. In one of his letters, his last one to Henry, he wrote.

"Henry, remember this now and after I am gone, you are my son, now and in the other land, but as you must instinctively feel, although I believe I have never hinted at it in the farthest degree, I desire more than any earthly thing, to see you the husband of our child, the son of our house. I think you must be able to love my

poor Jenny; I even think that you love her now; but I feel that my mind would be easier if I *knew* your sentiments. And hers toward you. For neither have I touched the subject in her hearing. I have always meant not to touch it at all, lest she, and especially you should let my wish trammel you. And I always have desired. I still, in my late hours, desire to leave you both free, *far* more than I desire a union into which a shade of unwillingness on her part or on yours shall come. I would indeed reprobate such a union with my whole soul. Remember this, son of my heart. I shall bid Jenny remember it, when I say the little I have to say to her on the subject."

The post-mark of the letter was a fortnight beyond the date. It came enclosed with the following note from a niece of Mr. Overn's, who was often staying at his house, in the lack of a comfortable home of her own:—

"HENRY—He is gone, my kind uncle. He was taken worse when he was sealing your letter; and died in two days. We know that he wrote hoping that his letter would hasten your return before his death. Now that he is gone we think that you will be as likely as any way to determine on staying indefinitely; especially when I tell you, as I am able to do, positively, that Mr. and Mrs. Jocelyn are going to Italy direct next January, sometime; and that their first object on getting there will be to join you; that is, of course, if you remain. They wished me to say this to you. I expect to go with them—but I am foolish to waste my paper to say this. I want to improve myself in painting. I have wanted it a long time; but have been poor, you know. This hindrance is over; for kind uncle Overn willed me five hundred dollars. And aunt spoke to Jenny about giving me two hundred more, if I go. Jenny colored (she blushes as easy as ever) and hesitated. But she spoke as if she would be glad to have it given to me; so I suppose I am sure of it. And they are abundantly able; for uncle has left them more than twenty thousand dollars; although he wanted them to give away a great deal all along, when they found those who needed it and would be benefited by it. Just as *he* has always done, you know. Only it will reduce their fortune more; since now their income will be so much shortened. Only! now listen, Henry Ward! George Davenport (and *he* can take care of what they've got, you know) comes nearer and nearer to our friend Jenny, and she doesn't retreat one step; so that one sees what is likely to be brought about one day or another. You were uncle

Overn's choice (and Jenny knows it.) But—well, I'm tired.

"So, good-bye; and prosperity be with you.

"Aunt and Jenny would send messages, no doubt, if I were to ask them for them, as uncles always used to do when he wrote; but they are hearing George Davenport read poetry. Let me listen; his reading, they love it so much! Jenny's face is in an adorable glow.

"I wish you would reply to this, if it be only to write one 'Yes,' signifying that you have received it, and another, signifying that you have decided to remain where you are; or, at least, somewhere in Italy, until the Jocelyns come.

IDA WHEELER."

"P. S.—Ah! I forgot to tell you that uncle Overn has left you three thousand dollars; and one or two of his fields. Half of them, I believe. I asked Jenny to-day how she liked it uncle's giving you half the land, and her and aunt the other half. She colored at first and looked amazed. Then she turned her face away and cried about it.

I. W."

Ida, though she thus wrote, knew that Jenny cried because her heart had suddenly been made desolate, and the question minded her afresh of what she had lost. Henry, when he read Ida's letter, looked as if he thought it might be this. At any rate he said, "Poor Jenny!" and wept again for the dear face, the dear voice gone from this earth forever.

He did not answer Ida's letter. He sat down when it was late that night and wrote a few lines to Mrs. Overn, expressing the sincerest condolence for her and Jenny, the sincerest sorrow for himself, saying not a word of coming or staying.

When his accession to the legacy was officially announced to him by Mr. Overn's attorney, George Davenport, he simply wrote a line of acknowledgment, and another line of "cherished remembrances to Mrs. Overn." Mrs. Overn had sent affectionate remembrances by Davenport. Jenny had not sent anything. Davenport had asked Henry in his letter to him, whether he would return to America within the year. To this Henry only replied, "About my return—doubtful when it will be."

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY wrote occasionally through the summer and autumn, short letters to Mrs. Overn and others. His friends knew from these, (although he said but little about it) that he was now for some months at Jena, and anon, for some months at Berlin, that he heard many lectures and spent

many hours in the libraries of the excellent Universities there; that he had, at any rate, the friendship of some of the best scholars and most distinguished men and women there; of this last they knew most, however, from other travellers and foreign residents. The Jocelyns, who had already been once abroad, heard about it directly from a brother of theirs at Berlin; indirectly from others in Italy and Germany.

So it came to pass that people talked about Henry Ward a great deal there at B——, and wished he would come; that his own town and they, his own people, might honor him.

"Yes, indeed!" said Ida Wheeler to Mrs. Overn, who talked with her about it one day. "They talk about how good he *always* was, you know. You look just as his own mother would, when you hear the least good word about him."

Mrs. Overn said quietly and with a face still beaming with her mother-like pride in Henry, that "She presumed she *felt* very much as his own mother would."

"As for Jenny not one word!" abruptly began Ida, wheeling the music-stool so as to look directly and plumply in Jenny's face. She had been "watching" her (to use a word oftener than any other on Ida's tongue) all along. She always watched her when Henry was talked about. In fact, she very often began to talk about him with one and another; often with Jenny herself on purpose to watch her, on purpose to come, by some of her round-about methods, to such a point of inter-communication as would assuredly take hold of Jenny's blood and of her expression. "As for Jen," resumed she, after having wheeled round to the piano, given the keys a light touch, and wheeled back again, "*she* says nothing. George Davenport says nothing. Only," in lighter, quicker tones, as she turned quite round to the instrument, "he says he means to buy those fields of him; if money can do it. He talks as if he were rich as a Jew, you see." She turned her head back a little now to talk as she lightly played "Oh, Susannah," saying, "And I suppose he is rich by this time, don't you, aunt Overn? don't you, Jenny?"

Aunt Overn and Jenny did not know. Mrs. Overn replied for them both. And immediately she began to talk with both the girls about the Dunlaps, a poor family in an old cracked garret over in the next street.

Ida was soon running off though out of the room; but in the hall she met George Davenport, just let in by the servant, with his hands full of letters and papers. He had just come from the post-office.

He bowed familiarly, *very* familiarly, to Ida, held the packages up before her with one hand, with the other took hold of her arm, setting her back again toward the parlor. So she went in with him.

"Oh!" exclaimed he, with a voice and look of suddenly recovered memory; "there's a letter," looking at the superscription as he passed it on to Mrs. Overn, "from Ward, I presume. He's in Liverpool, it seems."

He gave Jenny this piece of information; gave it with suddenly stiffened voice and backbone, Ida noticed; for she "watched" Davenport too habitually. He always stiffened, she had noticed, when he spoke of Henry. His brow always fell, for an instant. He raised it again instantly, and took the tension from his neck and tongue; and the very next moment, nobody, except perhaps Ida herself, was so clear of brow, so supple as he.

Mrs. Overn just glanced the letter over, holding it with trembling hands, reading with a heightening color, when she announced to them in joyful tones that Henry was coming home. "Coming home," Mrs. Overn always said with reference to Henry's return. Davenport and Ida always said, "coming to America." Our good, still Jenny, bless her! said nothing. And she was so very quiet, that nobody except her mother who knew all about it, not even Ida and Davenport, narrowly as they watched, could, for their lives, tell how she felt. She turned a little away, with gathering color, assiduously hunting her work-basket over for the sewing-cotton—that she did not need. Ida saw that she did not need it, and a quick gleam of sarcasm went over her features as she marked it.

Henry would sail the next day in the Atlantic, Mrs. Overn said to them, again looking the letter over. "He would be at home then," she added, with a satisfaction every moment increasing, "before New Year; a day or two before. And one thing they would do," Mrs. Overn said; "they would ask all of their and Henry's friends there to spend the evening of the New Year's day with them and him; that many might have the pleasure of an early meeting with him; that he might see how many hearts welcomed him."

Mrs. Overn after this could talk and think only of Henry; could act only with reference to his coming. And as the time drew near old men and little children came through her gates, the children to bring flowers, parlor and hot-house flowers, (their mammas sent them) that they might be in all the vases when Henry came. The old men even said they "were glad."

So, on the last day of the year, when the shadows of evening were gathering, Henry

came—came through the gate to the wide door.

Passing on a few hours farther, dear reader, brings us back to where our story began, to the New Year's Eve, and Jenny sitting alone thinking of many things, listening meanwhile to the solemn voices of the night; brings us beside to Ida in her chamber, hair and dress in completest disarray, writing the following letter to Mrs. Jocelyn. That lady and her husband, who was an artist, or who was at any rate an assiduous painter of foreign landscapes, were already at New York, whence they were soon to sail.

CHAPTER V.

"You see," wrote Ida, "Henry Ward has got here. (You received my letter of the 25th, didn't you?) He got here this afternoon. I was gone out when he came. I was sorry enough, I assure you; for I meant to see how they met; and by some bold sort of strategy, by look, or manœuvre, or somehow, make a muss of the meeting.

"I heard he had come while I was on my way back to the house; heard it from a dozen, as if his holiness the Pope had come instead of simple Henry Ward. (I suppose, though, that he must be very learned and very saint-like in his goodness of life, since everybody says he is.) But between us two (and Mr. Jocelyn) I haven't much faith in any straitforward, unbroken goodness anywhere. Life, the life of everybody, and especially of myself, seems to me to be a sort of hodge-podge. I am mad that he didn't stay in Europe to be with us; mad that he is here with aunt and Jen, who pretend, both of them, to be as wise and saintly as he. And everybody else believes that they *are* all perfection. 'Pure as a babe,' 'sincere and truthful as a little child,' folks say of Jen. And he will see just how she is petted; this is the worst of it. He will think she is all goodness, as others do.

"But oh, dear, I must stop and fix myself. My bodice is too tight, my boots pinch, my hair plagues me falling into my writing, (I'll tie the curls up on the top of my head, as if I were a Camanche princess) and as delectable Toots would say, I am in a general state, thank you, of being uncomfortable entirely.

"There, now I am ready to go on.

"I came across George Davenport (went into his office on purpose after him, *entre nous*;) and brought him here ostensibly to see Henry the first thing, really to help me take care of affairs. Good! you would have laughed. Away down in your trachea and bronchial tube, I mean, as I did, as Davenport did. I can't stop to tell you

all about it in this letter; for I don't want to look stupid and ugly to-morrow on account of sitting up all-night-long. But this I will say, they looked as comfortable as three kittens when we came in upon them. Henry was speaking to Jen; and they had sincere, deep-looking eyes steadily on each other, as if they would not fail to understand, and at once love each other, just the same as if I had never done a thing to make them misunderstand and disrelish each other.

"George was 'happy to meet Henry.' Or so he said (with a stiff neck though.) Was ten times happier to meet Jenny. So he did *not* say; but was assiduous 'in season and out of season' to demonstrate it by keeping *close* to her, sometimes sitting before her, sometimes standing beside, or behind her chair, leaning on it; at all times by dallying with her, by his gay words and his laughter. I don't think she likes him. That is, that she approves him; she somehow manages to like everybody; or to make it appear to others that she does at any rate. She can never get away from him though. He has power over her to keep her near him and to amuse her; and this is my chief hope. I think he can keep her to the end. She used to try to avoid him, I know. But she seems to be done with it now. I don't think that it is because she likes him more, though; but because she feels that there is no escaping him. Especially as he is careful how far he goes; going just as far as he can, and not giving her the remotest chance to say 'No.' It would, you see, in the shrewd way he manages be an absurd thing in her to take alarm or umbrage; and palpably shun him, or treat him with palpable repulsion.

"Hul! what a sound they have! the clocks striking midnight! The old year is gone, it seems. I hereby tender the compliments of the season to yourself and Mr. Jocelyn. I hereby write three lines more and then I go to bed; although I rather hate the bed. I lie awake so much with my head on fire with one scheme and another! And, when I sleep, I have such horrible dreams! You can't think! Jen sleeps exactly like a child; almost always with one hand under her cheek, like a child. She seems as if she were always feeling what I have more than once heard her say, 'It will all be right; for God takes care of all things and all beings.'

"P. S.—I must tell you though that I don't think I shall go to Europe. I fear I can't afford it. And I have something to accomplish here, you understand. If I can do what I mean to, perhaps we will be meeting you there before summer. Henry retreated a little from Jen, last evening before George. He kept an untroubled

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look, however; and did not come much nearer to me. He and aunt appear as though they would talk forever and never be done.

"Just as I am likely to do. But I declare, I feel such a tension; as if I could never stop, if I were forever to try. And now while I think of it, there is another thing I *must* tell you: something ever so much in my favor. Jenny knows that her father expressed his wish—or, in unminced terms—*asked* Henry to marry her. I overheard her talking about it with aunt in her chamber, this evening. She is terribly afraid that Henry will feel *constrained* by the circumstance to offer himself to her. She means he shall see that she does not expect it. She didn't say much. Aunt comforted her with her everlasting 'gospel consolation,' as the clergy have it. She is to do right; to wait quietly; to trust in God; to feel that this mortal phase of life is a short one; and that she is not to be anxious about its concerns, since all will surely be right and as God sees best.

"Have I told you anywhere in this letter that there is to be a grand gala here to-morrow evening? I guess I haven't. There is though; and it is to be a little the choicest of anything. The rarest supper, the rarest display of flowers and grand dresses. And *Jo triumphe!* I know of a thing I will do! You see if I don't do it! Henry likes to see the hair, if it is fine like Jenny's, and especially if the head is Grecian, like hers, without ornament. She knows it. He has told her so. She likes it so herself and will dress it plain. In the first place she will. In the second, she shall wear a wreath that I will make in secret. And George Davenport shall touch his fingers to it in Henry's sight, shall praise it in Henry's hearing; shall tell Jenny with *empressment* that he is grateful to her for wearing it. Good!

"Good! I'll keep this letter without a seal until after the party is over; and then tell you.

IDA."

CHAPTER VI.

"'A crown for the beautiful, a wreath of bay!'" said Ida, the next evening, as she entered Jenny's room with a splendid wreath of laurel leaves and bright hazle berries hanging on her fingers. Jenny was there still sitting before the mirror where she had been dressing for the evening. She was done dressing. Now she sat and read in her little, worn Bible.

Ida hesitated a little after she came within the door; and then coming forward with the soft, gliding movement peculiar to her, she laid the wreath on Jenny's head.

"What is that for, Ida?" asked Jenny, raising her hand a little as if to remove the wreath. "You know——" She meant to say, "you know I never wear anything." But Ida quickly interrupted her, saying, as she adjusted the wreath more firmly, "you see, cousin Jen," stepping round and round Jenny, to observe the effect of the crown, "the New Year has come to-day. I have somehow got it into my head that it is to be a capital sort of New Year for me. So I want to do something grateful for it beforehand; want to crown it. I don't know any other way of doing it, but by fancying it personified in you, as I do when I thus crown *you*. And whenever my eyes fall on you this evening, I shall say within myself, 'New Year, hail! I have crowned thee for this thy coming; now be propitious unto me, all the way through; and thus shall life, for the next twelvemonth (at least) go right with me. Something it never has done yet.'"

She was intently at work as she talked, here separating and there grouping with consummate taste, the dark leaves and the clusters of berries in Jenny's crown.

"Isn't it time to go down?" asked Jenny, speaking with an air of languor, as if she were oppressed by the magnetism of Ida's touches.

"No!" said Ida; not peremptorily, but with her softest voice, as if she were only beseeching. At the same time she laid a hand on each of Jenny's shoulders to keep her from rising, as she attempted to do. So albeit, Jenny was tall, and, in her truth and self-possession, very noble, albeit, Ida had a very little body and a very unquiet, Ida had her own way. It was often so between them. Jenny's actions both in private and in public was often constrained. But up to this time it had always been so that, out of the perfect sincerity of the words she spoke to people and of the glances she gave them out of her friendly eyes, appearances had been seen through; she had been understood and approved on every hand; and loved as few of her beauty, wealth and refinement are loved, without one shadow of envy. Even Ida's ruling passions against her were not dislike or envy. She was a poor, unhappy Judas, ready to sell her cousin's comfort and her own soul's for the gold and the *clat* that would come to her of a union with Henry Ward.

"No," repeated Ida. "I think I'll dress as one of the months, and I want it settled what month I will be. It can't be May, you see; nor April; not the month of showers, nor of springing flowers; for I never shed a tear; never! I never will, let what will come! And as for flowers, I can't bear them near me; flowers, or

babies, or kittens, or any pet thing. I should like to be August," light kindling in her eyes and upon the pale, dark skin.

No one ever saw color come to Ida's face. Sudden light, as it were a flash, came sometimes. She sometimes laughed—in a low, rippling way; frowned sometimes, but always slightly, always briefly. And this was all.

"The bell," interrupted Jenny, "they are coming; we will go down now. Take off your crown, Ida, please."

"No, no!" exclaimed Ida, cutting off Jenny's egress when she was half-way to her chamber door. "I must just tell you *what* I want to do this very year. I will do it in twenty minutes," leading Jenny with her prettiest steps back to her seat. "I'll just run down first and listen to see who it is. 'Tis the Tintelons, I'll bet. Nobody else comes so early."

She was gone "in the twinkling of an eye;" and was skimming the stairs on her way down before she was done speaking.

"'Tis they! I knew it was!" she said, as in a moment she was making her noiseless way back across Jenny's room. She spoke with a mincing voice, imitating Mrs. Tintelon; and came with mincing steps, making graceful bows along.

"Now tell me," begged Jenny, trying to face Ida as she still stepped about, bowing with a gliding, easy grace.

She was done bowing at once on Jenny's speaking; but she came up to see about Jenny's crown again, telling her that she had "got it out of its correct adjustment, naughty thing!"

"What is it?" again pleaded Jenny, "please tell me at once."

"Well, you shall know!" and her voice, although still low, as it always was, sounded to Jenny hard and oppressive. "I think I shall *certainly* do something *this* year; I have been just trying and driveling long enough." She hesitated; but finding that Jenny did not speak, she went on; still standing behind Jenny, with her hands locked, lying on the top of Jenny's chair. "I think I shall be married to Henry Ward; within six months." Her voice was still firm, but so low that Jenny could understand what she said only by listening with her might. She tried, moreover, to look in her face; but Ida retreated, saying, "No! don't look at me. I don't think I'm *fit* for him. But I *will* have him, you see! And he can scold me well," she added, speaking in lighter tones. "Every time I do, or say, or look anything out of the way, he can draw down his features, you know, as the manner of such pious husbands is, and say to me, 'Oh, Ida! child of mortality!—child—of—

immortality! don't be so bad!" So that, in six months, no Sister of Charity or sister of any thing shall be so correct and demure as I. Won't that be nice?" coming round so as suddenly to face Jenny.

Jenny looked pale, tired and very grave; but so she had been doing, for some time. Ida thought though that she was a little graver than she had been; a little paler—no, not paler; not now; for the soft glow that legitimately belonged to her cheeks was there now; brightening a little, scarcely perceptibly as Ida looked greedily studying her features.

"I *think* I shall be married to him," resumed Ida, moving away a little toward the door. "And I have reason to! I have reason to!" Jenny was slowly removing her crown, standing before the mirror. Ida cried, "No, no, you shan't take it off, Jenny!"

"Why, I must, Ida!" speaking with one hand still hold of the crown. "I never wear any such things; and should feel uneasy every moment."

"I should like to know why," beginning again to set it on correctly. "It is certainly very beautiful. At any rate, *you* can't see it, to be affected pleasurably or unpleasurably by it. It must be others that you think of; or, at least, *one* other. And if it is," speaking very fast and warmly, "I'd like to know what becomes of your great theory of 'self-developed action.' Divorced from your practice it is certainly."

"Don't let us talk about it," pleaded Jenny, with a discouraged air, letting her hand fall from the crown. "Take it off—that is a good cousin—and let us go down. *Do* take it off!"

"First tell me—or you will *not* tell me, I know. But I will tell *you*, Jenny, that you think, not of what you like, or of what anybody else likes, but Henry Ward. That is just what I think about it. And now you may wear it or not as you think—*becoming* in one of your professed individuality, as you call it."

She walked away from Jenny and her crown. Jenny looked after her with filling eyes; and, without again touching the wreath, avoiding looking again in the mirror, she said to Ida, who stood with her back toward her, looking out upon the calm, starlight evening, and thinking within herself that she hated it—"Ida, are you ready?"

Ida did not speak. But she turned slowly and followed Jenny to the parlor.

CHAPTER VII.

"HAVE you ever seen the Bacchante that Mr. Jocelyn did when he was at Florence?" Ida

asked. She came close to Henry Ward's ear as she spoke, and tipped her head stealthily in Jenny's direction. Now Jenny was standing at a table very near them, so near, that when Henry turned a little to see what Ida meant, he distinctly heard Davenport, who was with her, praising the wreath, praising Jenny for wearing it, "in spite," he said, "of the prejudice there was in some minds against such decorations."

He and Jenny both looked quickly at him, Henry saw, as the conclusion was reached. He saw that then Jenny blushed, looking with a very thoughtful face down at a print on which her hand had been resting. It was her favorite print, of the child Jesus leaning on a cross.

Henry certainly wore a more thoughtful face after this. Ida saw that he did, and at first could have clapped her hands (very softly, though, not for others to see or hear.) But very soon, as she watched his ways, keeping near him, listening to the words so child-like, yet so full of feeling and goodness; to the sound of his voice, kind as an angel's; kindest when he spoke to those old people, so deaf now that few took pains to make them hear. She felt what retribution remorse can bring; what a dread power it may take over the life, when the time comes that it does "bite like a serpent and sting like an adder."

But, *hu!* would she not slip its hold upon her? See whether she would not! So she made her way through the crowd of people standing, gliding this way and gliding that, until she was over by the instrument at which Jenny was just taking her seat. She was going to play "John Anderson, my Jo," to old Mr. and Mrs. Adams. They were almost done going out now, they were so old. But whenever they did come to Mrs. Overn's, they required that song of Jenny, and their tears always ran, at the same time that they smiled, before she was half through with it.

"I want to tell you something," whispered Ida in Jenny's ear, as the latter was placing her music. Jenny kept still to hear.

"You! I think Henry is really vexed, just about this wreath you are wearing. At any rate, he looked as though he was, when he and I were talking about it. Isn't he exacting enough?"

"If I think he is displeased," replied Jenny, looking earnestly but very kindly in Ida's face, and speaking aloud, "I shall tell him *why* I wore it. The truth will make all right. I would trust the *truth* any time, Ida. It won't always show that I did right, certainly, but it *will* always show, I hope, that I didn't mean to do

wrong; or, that if I did do wrong, I am truly sorry for it."

Our good Jenny didn't often speak like this to Ida, or any one. She was not much given to self-defence, as the reader must have seen. It made Ida quail a little as if suddenly a hand had appeared before her writing upon the wall, "Thy kingdom is divided."

She gathered anew her scattered forces, however, as soon as Jenny withdrew her eyes and turned back to the instrument.

"She ought *not* to sing! Aunt is afraid of her lungs now she has a cold on them," said she, glancing at the song and then speaking to Mrs. Adams. "Jenny, let me do it for you," laying one hand on the keys where Jenny was to begin her sopranos. "And when I have a cold on my lungs," bringing her face nearer Jenny's, and speaking in a coaxing voice, "you shall do my singing."

But the old people begged; Jenny disclaimed any indications of a cold in the last two days, and began running her fingers over the keys in the beautiful prelude.

"I was mad!" wrote Ida to Mrs. Jocelyn, "so mad that I trembled in every fibre of every muscle. What kept the girl up in that way, I can't think. I thought it would take all her spirits out of her, if she *knew* for a certainty that she had offended Henry Ward. For I *know* she loves him. I know it with greater certainty every hour."

Her truth and singleness of heart kept her up, thou poor Ida, thou who didst know so little how mighty a principle is the simple truth, to comfort and sustain the soul!

Henry Ward came near her as she was singing; came at length so near her that he turned the last page of her song for her. She sang

"John Anderson, my Jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ano anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my Jo."

He did not weep, perhaps. Perhaps none of the gentlemen wept outright, save good old Mr. Adams. But many of them, and amongst them Henry, felt deep emotions; for Jenny certainly sang it with a touching commingling of playfulness and pathos.

Many of them, and especially Mr. Adams—so near the other world now—and Henry, so near it always, through the highly spiritual character of his daily life—thought how blessed that world

must be, where songs rise day and night from the redeemed; the redeemed from the grossness, the poor, foolish pride and vanity that half spoil the earthly life of us all; that make us forget it, for days, whose children we are, and what a home our Father has prepared for us.

Many of them, Henry again inclusive, as the song went on, and in the still time after it was over, thought that there was a wonderful simplicity, goodness and exalted beauty in her who sang it, and that they loved her with just the kind of affection they would feel for an angel who left her *congenial* place, and came here to this—beautiful to be sure, and beloved, but, sin and sorrow-stained earth, to make purer and happier all who approached her; all who saw her and heard the sound of her voice.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE company was soon called to the supper-room; and Henry, walking along beside Jenny and talking with her, was at her side at table. And just where they halted, to the exceeding great surprise of Ida, they encountered her, coming into the line from another quarter; and George Davenport making his way from still another quarter. Both Davenport and Ida said it was "very curious" that they should all meet right there. It wasn't though so very curious, since Ida hurriedly slipped into his neighborhood on their slow way out, to say close to his ear, in passing him, "Come!" telegraphing by a movement of her head and hands in that direction, that he was to go round *his* way to the table, and she hers.

They and others who stood together with their little dishes of lobster salad, chicken salad, or *blanche mange* in their hands, eating, were steadily talking for a while of Emerson—Ralph Waldo; he had just come in from the room where he had been lecturing, and was at the part of the table nearest the door; and then, after a little pause in which they all waited to hear what Henry would say farther of him, in which Henry thought, not of Emerson, but that he must tell Jenny what he thought about her wreath, he said, looking Jenny quietly in the face,

"Your wreath is a splendid thing, Jenny, but I miss the old look about your head. You used never to wear anything."

"I never do, now," replied Jenny, giving him her saucer, and at the same time signifying that she would have more *blanche mange*. "I wish you would take it off now, Ida," going a little nearer to her and bowing her head a little, "and put it on Ino." Ino and the infant Bacchus,

Mrs. Jocelyn's gift to Ida, were close by, in plaster.

Ida, without speaking, went on tiptoe, and removed it. Henry immediately deposited his saucer on the table, and taking the wreath off of Ida's nerveless fingers, laid it carelessly on the head of Ino; and then, without giving a glance to its effect, he turned back to see if Jenny and Ida had all they wanted.

"My first impulse," wrote Ida to Mrs. Jocelyn, late that night, "was to drop the wreath on the floor, and put my foot on it. But somehow, their calmness, their unchanged expression stilled me. (It was just the same as if he had said, 'Rather rainy to-day, Jenny,' and she had answered, as if the state of the weather were one of her slight concerns, 'Yes, I see it is.')

"I gave it up then. I knew then that I had no more power over Jenny! over either of them. And George, imperious as he is, felt the same. I knew that he did. He knew that I did. Emerson was coming with quick steps to meet Henry, and he—George, I mean—turned away on his heel, with a bitter shade stealing over his face.

"Before leaving this phase of my New Year's life, (bye-the-bye, my year *does* begin beautifully, don't it?) don't you wonder that Jen didn't tell Henry that I almost compelled her to wear the wreath? I know I should have done it. She never will, if they live together a hundred years. I know her well enough to be sure of that. She readily tells the whole truth (in a few words she does it always) about herself, whether it clears or convicts; and, when she has done this, she has done.

"George whispered as he was passing me on his way out, 'Come to my office to-morrow morning at ten.'

"I shall go. People would talk about it, if they knew, but they won't know; for dentist's doors and daguerreotypist's doors open close by his, you know, upon the same area, up the same stairs.

"Good night. I'll finish this long, troubled letter after I come from George's office. I hope he won't disturb my mind with any new temptation to harass me day and night. I wish I *could* be as serene in my life as Jenny and Henry are. I am so tired!

"Well and well; it is all over with me. I am going to marry George. We are going to be so rich that nothing shall be in the way of our doing all we please. And I *long* to triumph over people. (I do not mean, now, Jen and her clique. Wealth has no more power to awe and overrule them than poverty.) But I will stand higher than Jen; and I shall feel it, if she does not. I will

live at Washington yet; and members and *diplo-mats*, and even executives, shall be at my feet. I will have my way with them, as if they were puppets. George is *sure*, you see, of going to Congress in three or four years.

"Dinner! *au revoir!* Henry is to dine here, I suppose. I suppose he will be dining here every day, after this. Oh, dear! and the sight of his and Jen's still enjoyment will half madden me sometimes. *Eheu me miseram!*"

Dinner waited a little for Jenny and Henry to come. They had left their chairs and so were standing ready to come; but they loved to linger there with no sound, or sight, or ceremony near, to detach their minds one moment from the blest assurance of mutual love. Jenny knew now—and, oh! what *rest* there was for her knowing without the chance for a doubt—that she would have been Henry's chosen any way, if no letter by her father had ever been written touching the subject; that for many a year he had gone steadily on, loving her more and more.

"But," said Henry, when he saw how happy his assurances made her, how her soft clasp tightened on his hand, every moment, as he talked, "you haven't a word to say to me about your own dear self; I *assume* it altogether that you love me a little and will love me to the end." He was smiling in her face when he began. But his eyes grew serious and his voice unsteady as he concluded. He drew her close to him, to his heart. Still she did not speak; for she knew when she laid her head upon his shoulder and heard him saying softly, "Darling, darling," that there was no need of words between them.

But they must go to dinner. Henry went first. Jenny sent him, that he might be busy helping the others at table, and they busy in being helped when she came.

CHAPTER IX.

WELL, Ida and Davenport are at Washington. He is in the House; this is his second year there; and he has grown intemperate and unprincipled, for this is what his constituents say. He will not be likely to get back again. He and his wife are fast deteriorating, at least to human sight. But God, on every hand, his constituents perhaps, with His all-seeing eye, knows a spot in some still corner of their souls, where *His* love sometimes goes and so saves from utter ruin.

The home of the Wards and Mrs. Overn is ever bright with intelligence and comfort. They often journey, often have friends coming to them from near and from afar; many of them very learned,

very excellent, very agreeable people. Very common people also come; and are as kindly received, as delicately entertained as the others; so that they go away with a feeling of elevation and comfort; thinking within themselves that "it is good for them to have been there;" wishing that all the rich and learned were like the Wards; half believing that if they were, the time would come, some day, when they, or at least their children, and all who now are so poor and ignorant, would be rich and learned like them. And good like them; oh, if *that* would only be, here, where so much wrong is done!

When Henry and Jenny are alone—and often at other times; for Mrs. Overn and many who come, have nearly as much interest in the philosophers as they—Henry tells her about them; about their lives, their homes and their graves that he himself has seen; reading to her now and then from their systems or their lives. He loves to read passages like this out of Fichte's Memoirs, and she loves as dearly to hear them—for she not only has the delight of loving Fichte, but of thinking, in her woman's heart, that *she* knows one just like him; her husband.

"His life is the true counterpart of his philosophy; it is that of a strong, free, incorruptible man. And with all the sternness of his morality, he is full of gentle and generous affections, of deep, overflowing sympathies. No tone of love, no soft breathing of tenderness fall unheeded on that high, royal soul, but in its calm sublimity find a welcome and a home."

Jenny loved the inscription above Fichte's grave:—"The teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." She thinks, with tears choking her, that that shall be above her husband; for with what a beautiful life, with what gentle, loving words of truth and wisdom is daily leading her nearer and nearer to heaven! What large numbers beside herself hang upon what he says! love him and God, and all their kind, the wretched, the lost—so-called—and all; live truer, and a thousand times happier lives, for his being, unconsciously to them, unconsciously to himself, a teacher, "turning many unto righteousness!"

ROSA BLAKE AND HER LOVERS.

BY CARRY STANLEY, AUTHOR OF "ADA LESTER'S SEASON IN NEW YORK."

CHAPTER I.

"Rosa, Rosa, Rosa Blake! Where on *earth* can the child be? Every pie in the oven's burned to a coal, I'll be bound!" and good, bustling Mrs. Blake hurried up from the cellar, milk-pan in hand, as the smell of the burning pastry reached her olfactories.

But Rosa had forgotten all about the pies, and was now high up in the hay mow, hunting hen's eggs. She had paid a visit to the stall of the white calf; had carried an apron full of oats to Jerry, a superannuated old horse; and had frightened the speckled hen from her nest, when her mother particularly wished that very hen "to set," as she technically termed it.

Mrs. Blake, with a vexed energy, was crushing lumps of white sugar under her rolling pin, when Rosa entered. The girl's appearance did not tend to mollify the mother. Her pretty curls were in the greatest disorder, with a blade of hay hanging in them here and there, and covered with dust; her neat chintz dress had a great rent in it; and an egg or two had got broken over her apron, in her descent on the rickety ladder from the hay mow.

"Rosa, I declare you ain't worth your salt, since you went to that boarding-school," said Mrs. Blake, as she lifted her rolling-pin higher than usual, and brought it down with a crash on the lump of sugar under it.

"Why, mother," said Rosa, good-naturedly, "I thought you wanted some eggs for the sponge cake, and I went to hunt them."

"I wanted you to tend to the oven first, as I told you. And a pretty batch of bread and pies I shall have to-morrow, to be sure; and so much company coming, too. It's too bad, it was as light as a cork when I put it in. Nobody'll believe, after eating that burnt up stuff, that I got the premium at the Fair for the best bread."

Rosa laid the eggs from her apron on the up turned lid of the dough-trough where her mother was working; and with a sigh and a disappointed look she stood watching Mrs. Blake, as the latter seized a large earthen pan and scraped the powdered sugar into it with her hand.

"Oh, let me do that, mother, I know I can. I used to before I went to school, don't you remember?" said Rosa, her face brightening, as

her mother took up one of the eggs, gave it a sharp crack on the edge of a cup, and divided the brittle shell evenly in two.

"No," said Mrs. Blake, still unappeased, "I'll do it myself, you'll get the yolk and the white all mixed up, and then a pretty mess I shall have of it," and she went on breaking open the eggs, tossing the rich yolks from one piece of shell to another, drawing off the white in the meanwhile with as much dexterity as a Chinese juggler tosses the balls. "This cake ought to have been beat up a quarter of an hour ago. The oven's as cold as charity by this time, I expect," and the good woman hurried over to the oven, bobbed her head in to discover the temperature, seized the long-handled scraper and spread the coals more over its surface, added a few corn-cobs from a basket in the corner, and then returned to the dough-trough.

But Rosa had taken her mother's place, and was breaking the eggs as nicely, if not as fast, as Mrs. Blake herself could have done.

"Now, mother, these have to be beaten up with the sugar, haven't they? Oh! I remember all about it now."

The dame's face brightened as she saw with what energy her daughter worked; and good Mrs. Blake began to think Rosa not quite spoiled by her schooling, after all.

Presently there was a great scraping of feet heard, followed by a clearing of the throat; and Rosa, looking up, saw a tall, uncouth man standing in the doorway, with a hand resting on each side of it, as he asked with a look rather than a bow, "Is Samuel home?"

Before an answer could be given, the figure had sprung several feet into the kitchen, for Susan, "the help," who was determined that nobody's "out shed" should look nicer than her own, and who generally scrubbed it and rinsed it till the bricks were as red as beets, threw a huge pail of water immediately in the direction of the kitchen door, so that it went sluicing over the feet of the visitor. It was with difficulty that Rosa could suppress a scream of laughter; and her plump shoulders shook with suppressed merriment, as she turned her back on the astonished-looking individual, who now stood in the middle of her mother's kitchen.

"Good day, Mr. Johnson," said Mrs. Blake, "I hope Susan didn't wet your feet; she is a head-over-heels kind of a body when she once gets started working. Samuel's not about, just now, but I guess you'll find him down in the new corn-field, or else in the piece of ground they're clearing by the swamp. Or sit down and wait for him, won't you, Mr. Johnson," continued Mrs. Blake, taking a chair from which all the paint had been scrubbed, and dusting it with her apron, though it was already as clean and white as soap and sand and Susan's two sturdy arms could make it.

"No, I must be going," answered Mr. Johnson, withdrawing his eyes at last from Rosa, who, whilst her mother had been talking, had so far suppressed her merriment as to be able to turn around, with her face overrunning with sparkling mischievous smiles, which produced such an effect on Mr. Johnson, that he had, during all that time, stood in open-mouthed admiration of the fair girl.

With an awkward attempt at a bow, the visitor turned to depart, but looking around again at the Hebe in the kitchen, he backed out into the arms of Susan, who with a hickory broom in one hand, and a bucket of water in the other, was standing just outside of the kitchen door. The collision sent the water splashing over Mr. Johnson's feet again, and Susan muttered something about "people being as blind as owls," in a voice quite audible enough to reach the ears of him of whom it was spoken.

Rosa burst out into another fit of laughter, which this time she did not endeavor to suppress, as she asked, with the tears fairly starting in her eyes,

"Oh, Susan, *did* you do it purposely?"

But Susan, who had been "bound" to Mr. Blake when she was but ten years old, and who had now lived to the mature age of thirty, was a privileged servant, and she gave no signs of having heard Rosa's question, except by a twitching about the corners of the mouth, which looked suspiciously like a grim smile, and which can only be accounted for, if it was there, by a story told by ill-natured people, that Mr. Johnson had usurped the place in his bachelor uncle's affections, which Susan, with good reason, once flattered herself she occupied. It was added that her enmity was always aggressive toward the man who had despoiled her of all those broad acres, by his flattering attentions to his wealthy relative.

"That Joe Johnson's a snake in the grass," Susan said, after the young man had finally established himself at his uncle's farm.

THE Sabbath morning dawned with such a bright, holy quiet, that Rosa Blake thought there could never have been such a Sabbath before. She stood leaning against the window frame, her laughing face sobered into a sweet thoughtfulness. Far across the meadows, and up from the valley where ran the stream, a silvery mist arose, enveloping trees and fields in hazy beauty. The far-off hill top seemed to be crowned with a halo of glory, as the mist swayed to and fro, and then slowly lifted, but half revealing the distant scenery: and she thought of Bunyan's vision of the New Jerusalem, the Holy City which came down from heaven.

The entrance of Mr. Blake aroused Rosa, and she turned around, unconscious of the tears which were in her eyes. A shade passed over the father's face, as he continued to watch his daughter, whilst he wiped his hands on the "rolling-towel" behind the door; then he went and stood by her, for she had again turned toward the window.

"Rosa," he said, "I hope that what your mother fears is not so; and that you are not unhappy at coming home, and settling down among plain country folks. It will be a dear bought education, if that year away at school has unfitted you for your station."

"What *do* you mean, father?" asked Rosa. "I was never happier in my life; everything is so beautiful, that I feel like crying; I don't know what for, to be sure," she continued, with a gay laugh; "but sometimes I want to cry when I am happy, more than when I am sad. Now, father, if you will only give me a little spending money to buy new books, now and then, I shall be the happiest little girl in the world;" and she fondled his great red hand between her own little ones, and looked up coaxingly in his face.

"Oh, you monkey. Not satisfied with what I've spent on you already, eh!" but he kissed his daughter with so much affection, and looked so proud of her, that she was satisfied her request would be granted.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Blake, after a pause, "mother's dreadful afraid you'll be a book-worm; so let's make a bargain. For every pound of butter that you churn, or every cheese that you help make, and all the eggs you hunt up, you shall get half price. They've always been mother's pin money, but I guess if you'll work right well, she'll be willing to take the calves instead."

Rosa gave her father a delighted kiss, and went up stairs to her mother, to ask how much

butter, and how many cheeses and eggs she sold every week.

Mrs. Blake was busy putting out her husband's clothes, which he was to wear to meeting. The snowy white shirt was fragrant of rose leaves, as she unpressed it and laid it open on the bed; then the new cassimere pants, and the buff vest, and the grey socks, and red bandanna handkerchief were all placed beside it, before she answered her daughter.

"What do you want to know for?"

Rosa explained her father's promise, adding, "you know, mother, that you are to have half, as well as all the money father gets for the calves."

"Well, I don't mind, if it will only make you buckle to and work a little; but I guess you'll not earn much that way, with all your new-fangled notions," and Mrs. Blake opened a long drawer as she spoke, and took from thence her husband's Sunday coat, which lay neatly folded throughout the whole week in that particular drawer, the sole occupant.

We must acknowledge that it was with something of a flutter that Rosa Blake dressed herself for meeting, for the first time after her return from school. She was not at all above the vanities usual to girls of seventeen; and she hesitated some time between her *barège de laine*, and her plaid summer silk, and one of her two tissue dresses. The silk was decided upon, and as she arranged the apple blossoms, which composed the full trimming of her pretty straw bonnet, so that each petal would show, she smiled to herself as she thought that the severest critics on her dress that day would be obliged to confess that it was in good taste.

Mr. Blake kissed his daughter when she descended to the sitting-room, and called her his "Rose-bud;" and Mrs. Blake gave a satisfied smile as she arranged Rosa's collar and the bow on her bonnet.

But once in the open air, all the girl's vanities vanished. As the well-fed horses jogged slowly along, Rosa leaned forward to inhale the fresh air in long gasps. The blackberry bushes, waving with blossoms, in the hedges; the wild roses; the sweet fern, and tasseled pine, all seemed to possess a new beauty and new fragrance.

"I feel somehow as if God was walking the earth, to-day," said Rosa, softly, and almost unconsciously.

Mr. Blake turned around and looked at his daughter in surprise; then he put down his hard, weather-beaten face and kissed her, as he said, "God bless you, Rosa:" and he endeavored to turn his thoughts from his fat cattle and teeming earth to subjects more suited to the day.

Meanwhile vehicle after vehicle passed them rapidly, the occupants looking out and giving friendly nods and "good days" as they drove by. It required, at last, Mrs. Blake's injunction to her husband to "jog on a little faster, for she did hate to be late to meeting," before he noticed the snail's pace at which his horses were going. When they entered the meeting-house gate, the wagon sheds were already nearly full, and knots of people stood about the doors and under the trees, awaiting the coming of the pastor as a signal for their entrance into the meeting-house. The men and women stood apart from each other, as determinedly as if they were unforgiving enemies; the former talking about the crops, the weather, and the field "hands," and some of the younger ones looking very stiff in their Sunday suits; whilst of the latter, one female complained that her girl had gone off a week ago, and promised to return the next day, and that she had never set eyes on her yet; and another inquired of a neighbor if she could let her have a couple of dozen more cabbage-sprouts; and a third requested of a friend, that if she went to town that week she would match her some brown silk; and another lamented the scarcity of cherries, for she "didn't know what she *should* do for pies;" and so on throughout nearly the whole congregation, mere secular affairs being carried almost to the very altar.

Yet there were some, nay, many, who were sincerely pious people. Men who out of very thankfulness for all their blessings, and in the name of Christ, would give a good milch cow to a needy or unfortunate neighbor, or supply a poorer family than their own with many a basket of spare-ribs, and scrapple, and sausage; or rosy-cheeked apples and a fat turkey for Christmas: and women, who after a toilsome day at the wash-tub or baking-oven, would make dainties to carry to a sick child and sit up with it, and watch it with motherly care; but their daily anxieties and hourly pleasures were, we think, more easily laid aside than the envyings and strivings; the new bales of merchandise and "the tables of the money changers," which, too often in our great cities, occupy the house of God.

Mr. Blake handed his wife and daughter from the wagon, and then drove the horses under the shed, whilst Mrs. Blake stopped to greet a neighbor, and Rosa stood for a moment irresolute, for she expected some one should have come forward to speak to her after her year's absence. But none of her old playfellows advanced a step. Most of them stood in a group under a tree, eyeing her askance, their handkerchiefs primly folded in their hands; whilst some, who thought

if Rosa saw them looking at her, she would suppose they were admiring her dress, turned their backs upon her. Rosa, however, took in the whole thing intuitively. "They won't speak first, because they think I've grown proud," she said to herself, so she advanced with a kind smile, saying, "How are you all, girls? I'm so glad to get home among you again." And thus, in an instant, the circle was opened, and Rosa was in the midst; and before they went into the meeting-house, she had invited them all to come and see her, and have "a good, old-fashioned time;" and each of her friends had decided in her own mind that Rosa Blake "wasn't one bit stuck up," if she did dress so fine.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE the minister was reading the hymn, Rosa happened to look across to the other side of the house, and the first person whom she noticed was Mr. Johnson, a little in advance of her, leaning his arm on the back of the pew and gazing steadily at her. In spite of herself, a smile flitted over Rosa's face at the recollection of Joe's quick entree into their kitchen the day before. But Rosa little knew how difficult had been the performance of Mr. Johnson's toilet duties that morning, and all on her account. The bottle of pomatum, which had been bought months before from a travelling pedlar, had been opened for the first time, and half of its contents glistened on his sandy hair in great streaks; his collar, which, with its stiffly starched edges, was in frightful proximity to his ears, was attached to his shirt front by an extra quantity of pins; whilst his dark blue satin vest was made still more resplendent by the gilt chain which crossed it. But it was Joe's buff and blue cravat, that he considered the triumph of art. Twenty-five minutes, by his great silver watch, had it taken him to accomplish the "rose" which ornamented its front, a rose which he thought would be the envy of all the young men at meeting. The cravat had been taken off and unfolded, and folded again; it had been tightened and loosened; the loops had been drawn out and drawn in; and at last the "rose," as that peculiar kind of bow is called, bloomed forth to his satisfaction. Mr. Johnson's silk handkerchief had been deluged with half of a shilling bottle of cologne; a contemporary purchase with the pomatum; and after adorning his button-hole with a sprig of "old man" and some sweet-briar, he felt fully competent to ascend his buggy and appear at meeting.

The second line of the hymn had been sung,

when a clear tenor glided in, that attracted Rosa's attention. She looked around and discovered that the voice belonged to a young man of most prepossessing appearance, but whom she had never seen before. Rosa knew that it was rude, and said to herself that it was wrong in meeting to be glancing around so frequently, but she was irresistibly attracted by the stranger.

Mrs. Blake, good soul, in the meantime had noticed the direction of Mr. Johnson's glances, and they had set her speculating upon her daughter's probable destiny. The effect was apparent by her nudging her husband when he drove up the wagon after meeting, and saying in a low voice, "Samuel, suppose we ask Joseph Johnson over this afternoon. It's but friendly, for he must be lonely with no women folks about the house."

Mr. Blake stood with the reins in his hand, looking somewhat puzzled, but he only answered, "Very well, mother, if you say so," and turning to Mr. Johnson, who was near, he gave the invitation. We need not say that it was accepted.

"Mother," said Rosa, as they drove homeward, "is Jane Thompson going to be married?"

"No, child, not that I've heard of. What made you think so?" was the reply.

"I saw her talking to a strange gentleman after meeting, and thought he might be somebody from B—— that she was going to marry."

"Oh, no, that was Mark Anderson, that teaches school down in the red school-house."

"And a proper good teacher he is too," put in Mr. Blake, "I only hope we may have the luck to keep him; we have never had such a one since I've been on the school committee."

"Does he board around as the other teachers did?" queried Rosa.

"Yes, he's at James Thompson's now. I expect our turn to have him will come pretty soon," replied the mother. And so Rosa apparently dismissed the subject.

Two or three carriage loads of the expected company had arrived in the afternoon before Mr. Johnson made his appearance. Rosa, who was walking in the garden with Jane Thompson, saw him go around the corner of the house, where he thought he would be unnoticed, and take out his silk handkerchief to dust his boots.

Susan's story of "Joe's underhand ways," and her positive assertion that he was a "snake in the grass," had greatly prejudiced Rosa against her new admirer; and as the spirit of mischief was often traitor to her good heart, she quietly glided up behind him, saying, "It's a very warm, dusty day, Mr. Johnson."

Joe started as if he had been shot, and what

with his confusion, and the exertion consequent upon the stooping and dusting, the perspiration stood on his forehead in great drops.

Throughout the afternoon Mr. Johnson attached himself to Rosa particularly, and Mrs. Blake, whose fears for the bread which her daughter did not watch, had been entirely allayed on cutting it, turned her whole thoughts to Joe and her Rosa, even while she gossiped about her dairy and chickens with her friends; and she "dreamed dreams" of the time when she would be mother-in-law of the fine farm next to their own, and of the improvements that Rosa would make in the spring-house and vegetable garden.

As for Rosa, the child, she was somewhat *dis-trait* all the afternoon, so anxious was she, yet so afraid, she knew not why, to ask Joe Johnson about the teacher. At last she said, with what she considered quite a Machiavelian piece of diplomacy,

"Does Eliza Richards teach school this summer?" and the little hypocrite stooped down to pluck a pink as she spoke, in order to hide her blushes.

"Oh! no, indeed, there's a master teacher this summer, and such a nice one too, you can't think," was Jane's reply.

"I don't think much of him," said Mr. Johnson, impressively, as he looked at Rosa.

"Why?" asked Rosa, "doesn't he appreciate the advantages he enjoys in your society?"

Mr. Johnson glanced at the dimpled face of his fair interlocutor, and was puzzled as to whether the question was asked in respect or mockery: but he replied,

"No, but he's such a mighty-tighty kind of chap; and he doesn't know so much after all."

"Oh! Mr. Johnson," said Jane, deprecatingly, "he's one of the nicest young men I know, and he never makes a body feel afraid of him, if he is so smart."

"One isn't always afraid of smart people, Jane," answered Rosa, "why I'm not a bit afraid of Mr. Johnson," and her bright eyes glistened with merriment.

The unarmed lover colored to the roots of his hair with pleasure, and making a stiff bow, he laid his hand on the blue satin vest which was supposed to cover his heart, as he had seen it done in the play when he visited the theatre at P—.

The next Saturday came, and Mrs. Blake was busy as usual with her weekly baking. Rosa stood by the table washing cherries for the pies, when Mr. Blake entered, saying,

"Mother, it's our turn to have the master now, I believe, so I met him down the road just

now, and told him I would stop for him and his traps this afternoon, as I came out of B——"

"It's always the way," said Mrs. Blake, as she held a pie-plate up on her outstretched palm and shaved off the overhanging crust. "Here I am, hurrying myself to death to get done, to go into B—— this afternoon, and now that room has to be put to rights for the teacher."

"Why, mother, there isn't a room in the house that isn't fit for a queen to see," said Mr. Blake, well knowing his wife's weak point.

"You go on with the baking, mother," added Rosa, "and as soon as I've filled the pies, I'll fix the room for you. I'd like to do it."

So Rosa was soon heard singing away up stairs in the little room over the hall; which she swept and dusted, and spread the bed with a gay patchwork quilt, and coarse linen sheets, fragrant with laurel blossoms. The window-curtains and bureau cover were of immaculate whiteness, and on a little table which she filched from a spare room, she laid her choicest books and china ink-stand. The girl turned to survey her work as she was leaving the place, and she thought but one thing was wanting to complete the comfortable appearance of it; so she went down the steps, jumping two at a time, and made her way to the garden. Jim, the black boy, was bribed with the promise of two large ginger cakes when they came out of the oven, if he would bring some fern leaves from the neighboring woods immediately; but it was with a doubtful smile that Rosa thought to herself, "I do not know what mother will say when she sees this lustre pitcher," as she arranged the ferns and stalks of glistening white lilies in it.

So when the little looking-glass frame had been hung with feathery asparagus branches, gay with red berries; and a tumbler of roses, honeysuckle and pinks placed on the table with the books; and the prized lustre pitcher put in a conspicuous place on the wooden mantle, Rosa went down to call her mother.

Mrs. Blake surveyed it for a moment in silence, and then said it would all do well enough, but that Rosa might have spent her time better than in rigging the room up in that style, and that she was certain that the pitcher would be broken.

The girl that had been so happy in doing all this was terribly disappointed, but she was fully compensated when, that afternoon, Mark Anderson entered the sitting-room, after having deposited his trunk up stairs, and said,

"What a charming room you have given me, Mrs. Blake I'm afraid that you have made it so comfortable and tasteful that I shall not want to leave it very soon."

Mrs. Blake's face glowed with a pleased smile, though the look which accompanied Mr. Anderson's words was on her daughter.

That evening Rosa sat on the porch steps, and listened, during the long twilight, to her father and the teacher; saying nothing herself, but secretly thinking the young man a mine of wisdom; and when she went to bed, it was to lie awake a long, long while, and wonder whether Mr. Anderson was engaged to be married, and whether he would not think her better educated than any of the young girls in the neighborhood.

As for Mark Anderson, he did not sleep well either, in spite of the comfortable room, and cool, fragrant sheets. Rosa's bright face seemed to haunt him. He several times caught himself thinking it was a great pity that she need go to school no more, and imagining the opportunities he then would have had of bending over her to set a copy, or correct a sum; or of the gentle way in which he would have chided her for the mischief which he knew would continually break out, in such a character as hers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE quiet of a June Sabbath afternoon reigned over all. In the partially darkened entry Mr. Blake lay on the nicely cushioned settee; in his shirt sleeves, and with his gayly-colored bandanna handkerchief spread over his face to keep off the flies; puffing and blowing and snorting like a young locomotive, sometimes accelerating his breathing to such a degree, that an actual snort partially awakened him, when he would re-adjust his head, turn a little more on his side, and then begin again. Mrs. Blake sat in her rocking-chair, bobbing her head from one side to the other, now and then unconsciously brushing away the flies which annoyed her, and having a vague notion that Mark Anderson and her daughter were on the piazza together, but that to-morrow he would be at his school all day. The schoolmaster and Rosa sat on the long piazza, each with a book in hand; Mark sometimes addressing his companion, who would look up shyly and answer him with something almost amounting to reverence, and then cast them down again on her book, but not to read; and he would turn over a page or two, and then his eyes would wander over the green grass, yellow with the sunlight, or up to the maple trees, through whose leaves the sunbeams flickered in ever changing beauty, and then back to his companion, and end it all with a sigh, that she was the heiress of rich farmer Blake, and he only a poor schoolmaster.

A rattling of the latch at the front yard gate

made both Anderson and Rosa look up, and there stood Mr. Johnson radiant in nankeen pants, which were of the most approved cut, and tightly strapped down. Closing the gate with elaborate slowness, he proceeded leisurely up the gravel walk, and at the bottom of the piazza steps made Rosa a profound bow, but only acknowledged Mark's presence by a nod.

"Take a seat, Mr. Johnson, and I will tell father and mother that you're here," said Rosa, with anything but pleasure in her countenance.

"No, no, don't wake 'em up for me, Miss Rosa, I don't want anything particular," was the hurried reply; but he looked at Mark, as if he *did* particularly wish that the latter would leave.

Rosa cast a quick glance at Anderson, but he turned to his book again, and left her to entertain his guest alone. At last he arose, took his hat and sauntered in the direction of the woods. The girl was in despair, and as the schoolmaster closed the gate after him, she said her parents would like to see Mr. Johnson, she knew.

"Don't call 'em yet, Miss Rosa, please," was the enamored swain's hurried, whispered reply, glancing in at the sitting-room door: and then hitching his chair nearer to the girl, he said, "I want to know if I may keep company with you. 'First come first served,' you know," and he ended his question with a leer, and a puckering up of the mouth, that induced Rosa to think he intended to kiss her at once.

Now Rosa very well knew what this phrase used to mean, when Jake Smith at the brickyard "kept company" with their Susan. She remembered how on the Sunday evenings when Susan's beau came, she used to run around the house and peep in at the kitchen window, to see Jake's and Susan's chair drawn closely together; and how with a stealthy tread Susan used to pass her room, about daylight, still with her best dress on, but with hair somewhat rumpled; and how on Monday morning Rosa always chanced to alight on Susan's rumpled collar, which had been put on clean the afternoon before, and was now ready for the wash-tub; and how on these occasions, Susan would be so sleepy all the day; and her vivid imagination pictured herself undergoing this same ordeal, at the hands, or rather the arms of Joe Johnson, and no wonder that she answered, almost angrily,

"No, no, I don't want to keep company with anybody at all."

Yet she spoke, nevertheless, quick and low, for she had an intuitive notion that her mother would particularly like her to favor Mr. Johnson's advances. Nor was she mistaken; for immediately a "hem, hem," and a vigorous

clearing of the throat in the rocking-chair, made her look up to meet the angry frown of Mrs. Blake, who gave a couple of jerks of the head which seemed to say, "tell him yes, if he asks you again."

As for Mr. Johnson, it would be hard to define the emotions which Rosa's answer produced. He had the greatest faith in his own fascinations, but somehow the would-be-lover looked upon Mark Anderson as a rival, and he said to himself, "If that sneaking schoolmaster's got the whip hand of me, I'll"—but he did not say what, for as his warfare was never of an open kind, most probably he was not prepared how to act.

As Rosa was helping her mother to clear the tea-table, after Joe's departure, Mrs. Blake said, "What made you treat Mr. Johnson in that way, Rosa?"

"What way, mother?" answered the daughter, without looking up, but shaking the sugar-bowl which she held in her hand, to settle the sugar.

"Why, as good as tell him not to come here any more," was the reply, in an angry tone.

"I didn't tell him not to come here, mother; but I didn't want to be keeping company with him, and sitting up all night with a strange man," and Rosa, who had commenced meekly

enough, ended with a vehemence which startled her mother, for Rosa had Susan and her tumbled collar before her eyes.

Rosa thought she heard a suppressed laugh on the piazza, but she comforted herself with the reflection that she saw her father and Mark walk toward the barn, a long while before; and she cared very little for the astonished look which her mother turned on her.

"What *on earth* does the child mean?" queried Mrs. Blake, of some invisible person it would seem, for she did not offer to address her daughter.

"Why, like Susan and Jake Smith used"—answered Rosa.

"Why, you little goose, what would Mr. Johnson care to be sitting up all night for, when he only lives on the next farm? He'd just like to come to see you, sometimes, and you needn't be so stuck up, for he didn't say he wanted to marry you," said Mrs. Blake, who thought perhaps she could pique her daughter into receiving Joe's addresses.

A saucy smile dimpled Rosa's face, as much as to say, "I'm not afraid but what I can get him if I want him," but she had tact enough to know when silence was the best policy.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MRS. WALDEN'S CONFIDANT.

BY ALICE CARY

FOURTH OF JULY! The beating of a drum and the screaming of a fife were heard in the distance—some few thin clouds moved about the sky, as if to keep the light from dazzling—the air was soft and refreshing, not over warm, just sufficiently in motion to stir the young thrifty corn, and bring the scent from the tomato and potato vines—the orchards looked well, and the harvests generally had fulfilled a good promise. The people all through the neighborhood of Jacksonville were glad, and thought their village was about as thriving a village as was to be found in that part of the country—and so they well might think—the best farms commanded fifty dollars per acre—the soil was naturally productive, and there was abundance of wood and water and stone; fine clay for making bricks; beside other advantages at the basis of independence, and which made the farmers about Jacksonville naturally a little proud—and this pride extended from their own possessions to the property of their neighbors, and took in the fifty lots and thirty dwellings—the meeting-house, two grocery stores and tavern, denominated Jacksonville. There was talk of a seminary being built during the summer, and some prospect of the erection of half a dozen new dwellings, beside the certain addition of a third story to the tavern. The difficult execution of a new sign was already in commission, and it was whispered about the device was to be an eagle soaring toward the sun, with the motto beneath, "upward and onward." The commission had been entrusted to the wagon-maker of the village, whose ability in painting carriages served to warrant a genius for painting eagles. There was some regret that the sign could not have been completed and swinging before the "North American Hotel" on the glorious Fourth, but the regret was not enough to mar the general joyousness, and as for the landlord, the excellent Peter Holt, he had a secret project of his own that the completion of the third story, and the putting forth of the new sign should give eclat to the general training in the fall. Therefore he compressed his lips and put his full moon of a face under a dubious cloud when inquired of concerning the sign, saying simply, "we shall see what we shall see."

The people about the neighborhood had been astir before the cock on the day I write of, for a general celebration was to be held in Jacksonville, and in addition to the usual forms and ceremonies, two of the oldest men in the neighborhood—real Revolutionary soldiers, were to head the procession which was to form at the North American Hotel precisely at ten o'clock, who were to bear between them the American flag; and on each side of them little girls were to walk with baskets of flowers, garlands for the conquering heroes. And here let me say, their honors, while among us, were too few.

The village, which stood on a rising ground, could be seen two and three miles away, from positions where no woodland intervened, and now, even higher than the steeple of the church, shone the bright colors at the top of the liberty pole.

Not more than a mile away, and plainly in view, not only of the steeple and the liberty pole, but also of the people gathering in front of the hotel, and in hearing of the music, lived the family of Timothy Walden, consisting in all of husband and wife, Matilda, a young woman of eighteen, and two boys, fourteen and sixteen.

They had been early astir in common with their neighbors, but not joyously astir—they were not people who joined in celebrations, why, nobody knew—they did not know themselves—but they honestly believed themselves too poor to be justified in spending so much time and money.

There had been some hope on the part of the young people, up to the last moment, that they might be permitted to join in the festivities of the occasion. Even to drive the geese from the common, and assist in the removal of hoop-poles and staves, preparatory to the grand march, would have been esteemed a privilege by the boys, and to be allowed the most obscure position where she might see the procession and the green arbor over the dinner-table, would have made holiday enough to Matilda, and she would have been quite willing to forego the white dress and pink ribbon which the young ladies generally had.

When the breakfast was concluded, Mr. Walden went out to the harvest-field as usual, and

apparently did not once think of a suspension of labors. Sullenly the two boys followed, half wishing it might rain and spoil all the fun for other people, for nothing so embitters the heart as the constant denial of innocent pleasures. And here let me say that Mr. Walden was the owner of sixty acres of as good land as was to be found in the neighborhood, beside all necessary horses, carts, and implements of labor generally. His fences were in repair, and a thrifty orchard and commodious barn had rewarded his industry. A house, too, he owned, or rather the foundation of a house, for it was unplastered and unpainted, and altogether unfurnished except the actual necessities about the kitchen and sleeping-rooms. The sun streamed across the bare floors through the uncurtained windows, and great piles of bedding and heaps of rags and wool filled the empty rooms—there were no flowers about the yard, and the garden in the rear was quite overgrown with weeds.

A good, patient, hard-working woman was Mrs. Walden—but she was not hopeful any more—she said she was tired of hoping. She had tried so long and so hard to get a little beforehand in the world, and what had it amounted to? Thoughts of this sort were busy in her mind on the beautiful Fourth of July aforementioned. It had never been her habit to indulge in hard thoughts, but somehow that day she could not help it—the house had never looked so naked and comfortless; she had never seen so little prospect of ever having anything, and in her absence of mind she let fall the coffee-pot and broke it in pieces, as she cleared the table; true, it had leaked a long time, but then it was better than none—dear me, what would become of them! She had done her part—nobody could say she had not—who then was to blame? if it was not Timothy she did not know who it was. This suspicion once allowed to come into her mind, made room for many accusations, and she put together all the Fourth of Julys and other holidays she had spent at home and working hard, and no thanks from nobody, which meant, from Timothy. They had never had a Christmas dinner nor a New-Year's dinner so long as they had kept house—and who was to blame—why somebody must be; but no matter for that, she must try to do her duty at any rate—so she worked on, thinking harder and harder things. Happening to look toward the field, she saw the two boys turning summersets in the shadow of a tree, for they felt it to be their right to be idle on the Fourth of July, and for the moment she felt as if she was all the one that did anything to any profit, and this the more, perhaps, that

as she looked she saw Timothy making his way to the fence where young Dr. Meredith, who was just come home from prosecuting his professional studies in a distant city, was waiting to shake hands.

"Dr. Meredith, indeed!" exclaimed the unamiable woman, "a great doctor I guess he is." And if her supposition that it was impossible for John Meredith to be a doctor could have been analyzed, it would have been found to consist chiefly of the facts that she had known John Meredith when he had but two shirts, she had known the colors of all his various boyhood coats, and how hard his mother worked and how much she denied herself for the sake of educating him; and more than this, she knew his mother before him, and all her family. That she had ever known John to be other than a good and obedient boy she would not say—but what of that—there he was, dressed finely, and going to pass the day in idleness—perhaps ere he would read the "Declaration," and be called "doctor" by some silly young girls, at any rate.

Then her thoughts naturally reverted to her own daughter, and she became aware that her wheel was still, which added to her irritation, and in no mild terms she enjoined her to go forward with her work.

Still, ever and again there was silence in the parlor where Matty should have been spinning—how could she keep her eyes from the public road filled with wagons and carriages, and young men and women on horseback and on foot, all with happy faces and dressed gaily, going to the Fourth of July. Amongst the rest there is one who looks earnestly toward her and bows very low, and close against the pane she presses her face before she sees it is Dr. Meredith; but her sweetest smile and a double recognition are given, for though she has played "hide and seek" with him many a time—aye, and even beaten him in the spelling class at school, she is pleased to see that he has come home, and never once thinks it is not possible for him to be a doctor. "Dear me!" says Mrs. Walden, as the wheel stops again, "well, I must work all the harder for the idleness of the rest, I suppose," and with a shining tin pan in her hand she makes her way to the garden. She don't know what she will find, she don't suppose she will find anything, and sure enough she does not; the cucumber-vines are yellow, and seem to be dying; there is not a cucumber to be found larger than her little finger, and as for the tomatoes, they might just as well never have been planted; there are a few onions run up to seed among the weeds; the cabbages are not

heading at all, and she can't tell where the beet bed was made. So, through nettles and burs she makes her way out again, stopping for a moment at the current-bushes, as a forlorn hope—she finds a few poor little berries, but if she picks them now there won't be any left, so she leaves them for a greater emergency, and with an empty basin returns to the house. The flies are buzzing thick along the ceiling, and one or two old hens are picking the crumbs from off the floor—they ought to have plenty, but they have not—there are not more than half a dozen chickens in all, about the farm; the hens don't do well—she don't know why; possibly there is some fruit in the orchard large enough to cook, but she don't know as she will tralpee there after it, if there is; there is part of an old ham left, she will cook some of that for dinner, and when that is gone she don't know what they will do. She is mending the fire when Timothy comes to the well for water, and seeing pieces of the broken coffee-pot, says,

"How did this happen, Sally?"

"I let it fall," she answers, "and I don't care if I did."

"Why, Sally, what put you in such a humor? I am sorry the coffee-pot is broken, but I did not mean to blame you;" and he adds by way of lessening the disaster, "see here, I have been doing mischief, too," and he exhibits a hole in his shirt sleeve which he had caught in a brier and torn.

Sally does not speak, for she secretly believes that her husband does blame her, perhaps from the fact that she is blaming him.

"I am afraid our Fourth of July friends will get wet," says Timothy, looking up at the sky, and making a last effort to elicit some notice from Sally before he goes back to the field.

But for the first time in her life she refuses to speak, and with tears brimming up in her eyes goes to the closet and takes from the shelf a bundle of old patched and darned shirts, and sitting down, adds patches to patches, and darns to darns—there are a dozen good new ones on the shelf, to be sure, but if they were worn out they would not be new—so with the tears falling fast she works on. There is a rap on the open door, and looking up she sees Mrs. Eliza Bates—a neighbor whom she has known well ever since her marriage, and before, in fact. Indeed, they were quite confidants at one time. But their intimacy has not been very great for a long time—Mrs. Walden has never felt that it was right to have any confidant but her husband—and it is the fault of Mrs. Bates that she is given to talking over much, and Mrs. Walden

knows it. She has had, too, great worldly prosperity, and this has cooled the friendship formerly existing between them, perhaps. But sympathy is sweet, and when Mrs. Bates says in tones of real kindness, "why, my dear Sally, what can be the matter with you?" at the same time putting her arm kindly about her neck, she answered, crying all the time, "I am so glad you have come, Eliza, for I felt so lonesome and bad, sitting here alone."

"I knew I should find you at home, and so while all our folks were gone to the Fourth of July, I thought I would come and see you, though you don't never come to see me."

"How good you are," replies Mrs. Walden. "I suppose everybody knows they can find me at home of holidays, by this time," and she hides her eyes in her apron.

Mrs. Bates holds her hand very close, saying, "really, Sally, it's too bad," after which she makes moan without the use of words, for a few minutes.

"Don't, Sally, don't cry," she says, at length, "but tell me all about it; a body must have some confidant—now, I tell my daughter Kate all my troubles—but some mothers don't say to their children all they feel." And in thus showing out her friend, Mrs. Bates was actuated by the kindest feelings.

"I suppose we all have our troubles," sobbed Sally Walden, for Mrs. Bates had spoken of hers, and therefore she could admit her private griefs more freely, and Mrs. Bates joined in quickly, "to be sure, Sally, I know I have mine—now if you had seen what a fuss there was at our house this morning about going to the Fourth of July, you would think you were not the only persons in the world that need cry; I got so worried out that I just gave up, and said I wouldn't go at all. I tell you, Sally, my life is nearly tired out of me in one way and another. Now Peter Bates is just the hardest man in the world to get along with, and if I did not manage and twist and economize every way, I could not get along; but I am determined that my family shan't be a whit behind anybody else." And here she went on to explain how she had taken her own dresses and made them over for Kate; how she had managed to make old things about the house look almost as well as new, and when at length she stopped to take breath, Mrs. Walden could not help giving some of her own grievances utterance; she did not want to say anything against Timothy, she did not intend it, but she did. "It's too bad," said Eliza Bates, "and though Timothy Walden is as good a man as ever was, and I believe means to do what is

right, he don't do his part by you, and I don't know as it's any more harm to say it than think it, and I have thought it a good while, and I am not the only one. Everybody knows," she continued, "that you never spend money—that you are always at home and always at work, and they can't help saying how does it happen that the house is never finished, and that Matty is not dressed as fashionably as other girls? Somebody must be at fault, and every one knows it is not you."

Now Mrs. Bates had thought many a time, and said it, too, that Sally Walden was more to blame than her husband—that she seemed to have no ambition and no pride since her marriage, but suffered all things to go at loose ends. But now that she sat beside her, and saw her thin cheek and old faded dress, and saw, too, the bundle of coarse patched shirts she was mending, her heart was softened a little more toward her than it had been lately, and hardened proportionably against her husband, and for the sake of being agreeable, and as is human nature, under the circumstances, she could not forbear speaking more than she really thought, or more than at another time she would have thought. She even proposed, in the heat of her zeal for her friend, "to give Timothy a talking to."

Many things about her own private affairs she put into the keeping of her friend, Sally Walden, such as that Peter Bates did not always give her money for the asking—that herself did a good deal of the managing that he had credit for, and that her daughter Kate would not now be, as she was, one of the very leaders of the Jacksonville society, but for her special exertion. And here she whispered very confidentially that Dr. Meredith had been two or three times to see Kate, and that she had reason to believe it would be a match. When Mrs. Walden arose to make some preparation about dinner, "don't, dear Sally," said the confidant, "I can eat anything that you can, so don't give yourself any trouble."

"I could not give you anything if I were disposed," answered Mrs. Walden, "there is nothing but ham and potatoes about the house."

"No matter, I had rather talk than eat," replied the confidant, and to ham and potatoes the neighbors sat down. Matty came from her spinning, and the boys from the field, but Mr. Walden did not come in to eat, he could not take time, as he was working hard to get some grain in the barn before it should rain. The neighbors had not noticed till then how cloudy it was, and Mrs. Bates cut her visit short as soon as the meal was concluded, assuring Sally, by way of

parting consolation, that she would come again soon, and that she would not fail to give Timothy "a piece of her mind." Tears came to the eyes of Mrs. Walden, for vexation with herself was struggling with gratitude to her confidant, and the annoyance was not lessened, when Mrs. Bates said, pointing to the worn-out shirts, "I'll declare, I would not try to mend such things, you lose more time than all you gain, and if Timothy Walden would not buy better shirts, he might go without any for all of me."

Mrs. Walden did not say, "Timothy has a dozen better shirts," but she thought it, for her heart was beginning to turn to its true allegiance. And the two boys returned back to the field, and Matty to her spinning work, and Mrs. Walden put away the dinner things with a heavy heart, and sat down alone, trying in vain to reconcile herself to herself—she could not do that, nor could she see a clear way before her at all; a feeling of bitterness and blindness, of inability and impossibility, kept her hands idle and drew her face into a frown. She did not see as she could do anything, and she did not know as she would if she could.

As she sat so she failed to see or hear the flies that came humming thick and black along the ceiling, and the shadows that deepened and deepened where the sunshine had been; she did not see the leaves turning their grey linings out, nor the clouds of dust that blew up along the road; the tempest in her heart did not allow her to see the one along the sky. Suddenly a bright flash opened, and at the same time blinded her eyes, and the crash that came after it deafened her ears, and at the same moment made them sensible of voices, reproachful voices that she had never heard so distinct before. Quick she hurried to the door, and strained her eyes toward the meadow, that was divided from her now by the blackness of the storm; a strong wind was bending the tops of the trees—she could hear branches breaking, and the frightened cattle lowing as they ran hither and thither; the rain dashed heavily on roof and grass and dry dust; the eave-ducts ran over, and the wind as it came bent in the very walls of the house. Matty left her spinning and clung to her mother as the lightning flashed again and again, and the thunder rolled as though breaking its way along the heavens. Awe-struck and trembling stood the mother, her eyes still bent on the meadow.

"Oh, they are coming," cried Matty, "I am so glad;" but scarcely had she spoken the words when it was discovered that the children came alone; to the frantic inquiries, for they came crying as they ran, they replied that a tree

under which they had taken shelter was struck, and that their father was killed.

"Heaven have mercy on us!" cried Mrs. Walden, her face growing white, and her limbs sinking beneath her, and her daughter and sons answered by sobs and ories, deepening, if it might be, the fear and terror of the time.

"What is the matter, my good friends?" said a voice, kindly and earnestly, and a young man that Matilda recognized as Dr. Meredith, stood in their midst. The awful calamity was explained, and the young man hastened to call the assistance of another neighbor who was returning like himself from the celebration at Jacksonville, and with a brief word of comfort and hope they hurried to the field, accompanied by the oldest son.

Ages seemed to pass in the minutes till their return, and when they came, the pain and the weight of ages seemed to stop and crush down the hearts of the mother and her children.

Dead—they were bearing him home dead!

"Let me die, too," exclaimed the almost distracted wife, throwing herself on his bosom—but when the doctor said there was yet hope—he might be only stunned and senseless, the struggle between hope and despair became almost phrensy—never till now had she known how good Timothy was, and how much she loved him. With almost superhuman faith and energy the young doctor strove to subdue the last enemy, for he was not yet quite triumphant. "Oh, if he were only well—if he could only speak to me once more, and say I was forgiven," cried the poor wife, as she looked herself to and fro and moaned for her own wicked accusations, as she now thought them, almost as much as for the lost; for there is no thought so bitter as the memory of a wrong to the dead. In her heart she accused herself of being his murderer; it was as if heaven had taken him away to show her how good he was. One who went to see how the tree was divided by the lightning, returned carrying a pitcher of blackberries, seeing which the youngest boy began to cry all the more; "he was picking them for you, mother," he said, "it was the last thing he did." Mrs. Walden could not speak; everything seemed to show her that herself was more and more to blame. Suddenly there was a cry of joy—the dead man was alive! No enemy, even death itself, it seemed, could stand before the array of love that fought him back. Words would fail to describe the joy of that household when the husband and father was able to say, "my wife and my children!"

The storm swept by—the breeze came fresh

and ool from the meadow—the clouds broke to pieces and scattered from the heavens, and the sun came out broad and bright for the setting. Dr. Meredith's reputation was established, for all the Jacksonville people said "if he can bring Timothy Walden to life, what is there he can't do?" and so came one and another for his medical advice and assistance. Perhaps the faith of his patients had something to do with it, but certain it is that great success attended him.

As may be supposed, Mrs. Walden found it the easiest and most natural thing in the world to say, "Dr. Meredith"—indeed, she quite forgot whether the coat he used to wear was black or brown, and as for the two shirts, she would not be positive but that he had had three; and she was quite sure she had seen him at work in his mother's garden a thousand times when other boys were playing. There was new light come into her world, and as the work and bustle of her life stood still while she waited at Timothy's sick bed, she found time to see how many blessings she had, and how many she had neglected.

She made no complaint of the time she was losing—on the contrary, she had never talked so cheerfully and hopefully in all her life, and it was perhaps as much owing to her good nursing, as to Dr. Meredith, that Timothy was so soon able to be about his work again.

"Now be careful, Timothy, and don't try to do much," said Mrs. Walden, as after a fortnight's illness he went forth from the house. He looked up in astonishment—came back a step or two—asked her what she said—perhaps for the pleasure of hearing it over, and when in substance it was repeated, he said he felt stronger and could walk better than he had supposed he could. So grateful and so loving was the look he bestowed on her that Sally could not help saying, "Eliza Bates give him a piece of her mind, indeed—she had better attend her own affairs, and I will tell her so if she comes here meddling with my husband." And as she went from room to room to see what was in them, and what could be done with their contents, she kept communing with herself something in this wise. Here are rags enough to make a carpet, if they were sewed, and here are heaps and heaps of bed clothing—enough to last all my life, and Matty, poor girl, has been spinning all the summer to make more. I'll take the yarn I proposed to have made into coverlids, and have it colored and woven into carpets—I will see if I can't have carpets as well as Eliza Bates, and though we have not money to buy new furniture just now, we can make what we have appear better. So she worked on and on, and at the bottom of all

her work was the thought that she would show Mrs. Bates that she had the best husband in the world.

Matty clapt her hands in glee when her mother told her she had concluded to make carpets and not coverlids of the wool she was spinning. "Oh, it will look so much better," she said, "when anybody comes," but she thought when Dr. Meredith comes. It was easy work spinning after that, and very soon the wool was made into yarn, and sent away to be colored and woven. Then the rags which had cumbered the house so long were cut and sewed and sent to the weaver's. Barrels and boxes were removed to the barn, and some curtains for the windows were made of common chints muslin, and Matty and her mother thought they would look almost as well as bought curtains, when that they were bleached and ironed smoothly. At any rate, they were better than Mrs. Bates'—both were sure of that. And all the while the work was going forward, there was cheerfulness in the house that had never been there before.

They had so much more time than they formerly had, they could not understand how it was, for though they were getting so much done they were not all the time working—for now and then they stopt to plan and sometimes to admire what was completed, and yet they had never accomplished so much when they had not taken time to speak in all the day. "If Mrs. Bates can make dresses for Kate out of hers, perhaps I can make some for you out of mine," said Mrs. Walden to Matty, one day, "there is my wedding dress and my old black silk and my white dress, and one or two gingham and calicoes, I believe, in the old chest up stairs, and I shall never wear them again." The chest was accordingly opened and the dresses examined—the white one was bleached, and with the addition of a yard or two of new cloth made Matty the prettiest dress she had ever worn—the silk, which had been an ample pattern in its time, proved all sufficient; the calicoes were made to assume new fashions, and Matty was dressed like other girls.

"There, Sally, you have been doing so much lately you deserve some pay for it," said Timothy, as he threw a neat parcel into the lap of his wife one evening when he returned from Jacksonville. It was a new dress, the first one she had had for a long time, and when she laid it in the closet she stopt to wipe her eyes, and having done so, she removed the old coarse shirts—they were not fit to wash windows with, she said, and she guessed her husband could afford to wear as good a shirt as Mr. Bates.

"No, Sally," said Mr. Walden, "I must wear

the old ones a little while longer till we get the doctor's bill paid." And he untied his purse and began counting the money he had already saved for the purpose mentioned.

"If it were not for that debt," said Matty, archly, "we might have got the house plastered, might we not, father?" She blushed and lowered her voice, for the doctor was already at the door.

"We were just talking of you," said Mr. Walden, "and perhaps I may as well ask now as any time what I am to give you for your services to me?"

"Not a cent," said Dr. Meredith, "my little service was nothing compared to the great service you have done me, for it was through you that I obtained the confidence of all the Jacksonville people."

"What a nice young man he is," whispered Mrs. Walden to her husband, when the young people had walked apart, and she added, "if he is in love with Katy Bates I don't see what he comes here for."

Mr. Walden smiled, and said he would see about the plastering the next day.

"Now, boys," he continued, "if you are a mind to help, I'll pay you the same that I would my other hands." Of course they were delighted, and when the house was plastered, half the money had still been saved, for to give it to the children seemed the same thing.

"Is it not beautiful!" exclaimed Matty, when the walls were finished and the curtains hung up and the carpets laid down—"why I never saw such a change with so little money."

"I wonder if Mrs. Bates' house looks any better?" replied Mrs. Walden, as she walked from one room to the other, not knowing which to admire the most.

"Mother and Matty have made the house so nice," said the boys, "we must see if we can't improve the yard a little." So they trimmed up the rose-bushes and swept off the grass and white-washed the fence, and the more they did the more they found they were capable of doing, and that a little *will* was better than a good deal of money. They even began to believe they could, the next year, make as good a garden as anybody.

"To be sure you can," said their mother, "but some how or other we get along with the table much better than we used to—"

But the "some how or other" was that she herself made the most of what she had; and when she had flour and lard and sugar and fruit it was easy to make short-cakes and pies, and cakes too. When she had nice butter and milk, and sometimes eggs—not so many as she would

like—another year she must try to raise more poultry—she did not complain, however—the potatoes were excellent—the apples had never been finer, and she could exchange her extra butter for such articles at the grocery as they had not at home—and she always finished her congratulations by saying while they were all alive and well they must not complain, for she never forgot the terrible day that Timothy was brought home dead. Neither could she quite forgive Mrs. Bates, she often said she was sure she wished her well, and that she would not lay a straw in her way—but when Timothy got a new coat and hat she hoped Mrs. Bates would see them. Three months were gone since Mrs. Bates had made the proposal of giving Timothy a piece of her mind, and still that malicious work had not been performed.

“Suppose we give her an opportunity by inviting her here to supper,” said Mrs. Walden.

Matty warmly seconded the plan, and a day was at once fixed. Such a busy time there had never been seen at Mrs. Walden's as the supper induced. The house was set in complete order—the nicest coverlids were spread on the beds, and

the frilled pillow-cases brought from the closets—a half dozen new chairs were bought—the silver was scoured, and the nice china set in the nicest order. Mr. Walden was to wear his new clothes, and Mrs. Walden the new dress; the boys were to make special preparation, and Matty was to wear her white dress.

Cakes were made, and custards, and a variety of delicacies I need not enumerate prepared for Katy Bates and her mother in the most excellent style; and as a crowning triumph Dr. Meredith was invited.

“It is all admirable,” he said, when he was told why the supper was made, for since the Fourth of July he had been very intimate at Mrs. Walden's, “but I have an amendment to suggest, which is that my mother and the parson shall be invited.”

I need scarcely say that Mrs. Bates, notwithstanding the charming occasion offered her, never gave Timothy a piece of her mind. Training day in Jacksonville saw the completion of the third story of the North American Hotel, and brighter even than the new sign, shone, upon that occasion, the faces of Dr. Meredith and his bride.

MARIE TREVOR.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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CHAPTER V.

THE COTTAGE AND THE CASTLE.

THE dawn came on with clouds. A few teams rattled along the country road—the smoke curled white and dense from the chimnies of the distant cottages—but the home of old Miles Goldfinch was a deserted look. The garden had been neglected of late, and the marigolds strove to put a cheerful face upon the matter—notwithstanding they were quite crowded down by weeds of noxious quality and homely show. Soon, however, appeared some signs of life within. The front door was opened, and a bright-looking, curly-pated boy appeared, and sitting on the big, polished stone in his night-gown, began voraciously masticating a huge piece of brown crust, thus staying his appetite till breakfast time. Pretty soon a sturdy, farmer man went toward the well with his bucket, and lustily swung the cool, refreshing beverage from the black depths below. Window after window was thrown up, so that the sun just struggling through the clouds, sent a solitary spy to reconnoitre within. There was not much to be seen save the quaint, wide, homely old brick hearth—and the straight-backed chairs ranged each side of the room—a long pine table in the centre—a little, yellow-washed, wooden settle in one corner—and now and then bending over the crackling fire, a smart-looking woman, clasping a large baby to her bosom, thus attending to more occupations than one.

As her husband came in, she superintended filling the kettle—and then sat down with a good-humored smile to welcome two more little ones who ran in, fresh from sleep, slapping each other with great, good humor, and screaming their mirth aloud.

"Hush! you'll wake grandpa," cried the mother, smiling and frowning.

"Grandpa's awake—I been in there," lisped the elder, "and here he is now."

At that moment an aged man appeared, leaning on a staff. His silver hair—his weak and tremulous gait, his shaking hand bespoke his great infirmities, and yet the settled sorrow of

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that face alone threw a chill over the warmest heart, so palpable was it, that even children could read his suffering, and were silent in his presence. On he came, tottering and pausing, looking about with the air of a wearied, suffering spirit, then slowly advancing to the great arm-chair, he sat as slowly down, and essayed to smile a mournful smile at the children who crowded silently about his knees.

"Where is Jimmy?" he asked, tremulously.

"Here he is—and—what have you got my son, a letter? It's too early for the postman."

"I found it under the window, where I planted my strawberries," cried the young and handsome rogue, swallowing his last mouthful with a tremendous effort—"somebody must have threw it there; see, it's all wet."

The old man's son took the letter from the hand of his boy, and cast a meaning glance toward his wife as he read the direction. "From Ruthy," he involuntarily exclaimed.

"What—eh? Ruthy did you say?" cried the old father, "poor girl—once I had two—there she used to sit," he continued, pointing on one side of his knee, "and there sat Ruthy. How bright it always seemed when they were here—and both had their pretty arms about the neck of their old father, now she's gone—and they've gone—both of them; the house looks like a tomb now, it does," he put up his shaking finger to wipe a tear from his furrowed cheek—"come, boy, what is it? what does Ruthy say?"

Meanwhile the wife of John Goldfinch had sprung to her feet, frightened at the sudden rigid look and immovable attitude of her husband.

She could not find voice to speak, before he with a gesture of despair threw the letter at his wife and rushed from the house. The children gazed on all this with a strong inclination to cry; for with their instinctive penetration they knew trouble had come. The wife and mother read with an anxious countenance that grew ashy pale before she had done, the following; while the old man, unconscious of trouble, smiled and looked in the fire.

"DEAR FATHER—You will never see me again—but *Rose is revenged*. Farewell, and pray for me. Bless me, my father, for I have brought the cold, deceiving heart to judgment.

"BROTHERS—What you with strong hands and burning souls could not accomplish, a weak woman's will has done. You will see the minions of the great and guilty flocking about your door, demanding Ruth Goldfinch. Tell them she has fled to a distant land—and if they call her the child-stealer—point to the river—speak of my poor injured sister's honor—ask them who stole that! and health, life and peace away from a guileless family, and planted shame and grief in an old man's path. God be with you all,
RUTH GOLDFINCH."

"What *has* she done?" asked the wife, who had striven in vain to draw her husband to a seat in the little chamber whither he had betaken himself, and talk calmly before they disclosed anything to the old man.

"Heaven knows!" he cried, with a groan of despair—"hark! what noise is that?"

They flew down the stairs. Three men in police uniform had made their way into the kitchen, and stood there, confronted by the old man, who had raised himself to his utmost height, and with blaring eyes and gestures of defiance shouted hoarsely, "Away! hounds—away! or the old man will tear ye in pieces. What! dare ye—*dare* ye come with this language to my very hearth? My child, *my* innocent child, a thief and a murderer—God, God of heaven—if I go mad look to your lives!"

John sprang forward and held his father's hands—"I pray you, *father*, father, *only* hear me," but the old man, no longer weak, threw him aside as if he were a child.

"Hear," he shouted, "yes, *hear*! they accuse Ruth, our innocent Ruth, my noble girl, they accuse her of *murder*—by heaven! my heart has bled over one foul transgression—but let them breathe the word again, and I will see blood—I will *taste* it, villains! Where is the letter, John—give me the letter; you said it was from Ruth."

"Father, father," groaned the young man, in such excess of agony, that the veteran's uplifted arm sank to his side, and he gazed with vague, wondering looks, mechanically repeating, "the letter, my son—the letter."

But John sat motionless, his face buried in his hands. His wife sank weeping also at his feet—and the poor children standing outside the door, whither they had retreated, sobbed as if their little hearts were broken.

The old man looked on for another moment,

he seemed bewildered, "John, John, my son," he asked, in a mild and faltering voice, "John, has—has anything happened? Rose—has—has she come back, my son? Ruth—are they both here? then let us return thanks;" and kneeling down the shattered mind poured forth fragments of prayer and old petitions; he was no longer sane—his mind was gone—and forever.

"Oh! she is dying, poor, dear creature—poor, dear creature—and I because I did not stay—I shall lose my place—and the baby, the dear, innocent little thing that never did harm, dead and gone—and Ruth, that awful, crazy girl, gone too—oh, dear, dear, if this isn't too awful—too awful—what *shall* I do?" and poor Ware, almost crazy, rushed frantically from end to end of the room, next to where her lady was lying in a fainting fit—then ran from corner to corner, and finally stopped before the five or six physicians who were in attendance upon the unhappy Lady Walden.

The baronet had not been seen since morning. He had early received the note that Ruth had written the preceding night, and hastily read it amid shrieks, groans and confusion of the direst kind. And thus it ran:

"BARONET OF WALDENWOLD—Cold-hearted wretch—look for your child where your base designs—your cruel desertion drove my unfortunate sister. Look where the river runs strong and rapid—look for both her and I where you will find neither.
RUTH GOLDFINCH."

He crumpled the letter up in his hand violently, muttering between his teeth, "I knew the devil was in her, I saw it in her eye. Madman that I was, why did I provoke my fate?—my child—devil!—oh! fiend, look to your mistress," he said, more calmly, as he observed one of the upper servants regarding him with fixed and horrified aspect; "I am going for the police, and send to Lady Walden's, my mother, tell them to keep the boy by all means."

All day and all night they searched—and for many days and nights—but no tidings of either Ruth or the child—almost every road was guarded, but nobody had been by, except the toll-keeper said, very early in the morning a miserable little, old wretch, who begged her way, somewhere before daylight it was.

Lady Walden for many a long month never left her sick chamber. It was rumored that all that time she had been delirious, but that now, with a slow step and white cheek that smote the baronet to the heart to look upon, she moved

wearily about her beautiful home. That in a large box by her bed she kept all the little dresses, all the little toys of her lost darling, and every morning drew them forth with caressing fingers and a breaking heart. It was very sad to see her thus—and the baronet, too, grown so moody and miserable—even the very servants caught the melancholy of the house, and every body said it looked like the place of doom. The baronet indeed seemed suddenly to grow prematurely aged—his hair began to turn white, which would have been very remarkable in so young a man, if there had not been his great trouble to account for it. The only creature who seemed alive to life and joy was the young Lord Henry—but though Lady Walden loved her boy, still the memory of the dear lost child took from her the comfort of enjoying his society, and although she applied herself diligently to his education, her wan face told that her heart was with the dead.

CHAPTER VI.

A TREASURE FOUND.

"WHAT is it, mate?" asked the stout, burly captain of the famous "Manchester Sisters," as the former kept scrutinizing some object afar off through the old grey ship's spy-glass.

"Indeed, sir, it does seem like a small boat without a soul in her, but a right nice little thing, and I warrant you worth saving."

It was a clean, jaunty-looking schooner, quite new, and a very picturesque thing on the deep, dark blue of the ocean—the vessel commanded by Captain Counters, and he had been heard to boast, often, that he would not exchange the "Manchester Sisters," no, not for any big craft that sailed the salt pond. Evening was wearing when the tidy mate desoried, or thought he desoried "suthing flotin," as he expressed himself, and sure enough before fifteen minutes had elapsed it shaped itself out of the mist, rocking and rolling, drifting at the mercy of the winds; and occasionally as it came near, a faint moan could be heard.

"There's suthing alive in that there," said the mate, and hardly sooner had he spoken than the schooner's "cockle-shell was let down, and men stationed to pull in the craft.

"A baby! by all that's gracious, and alive too," shouted one of the men: "poor thing! she's a'most cried herself to death, judging by the eyes."

Slowly and carefully it was gathered up and soon laid in the mate's arms, who held it as if it was a piece of pasteboard.

"Dang it, I can't help it, sir," exclaimed a

weather-beaten tar, dashing the tears from his eyes; why he should have so said was incomprehensible, for nobody had spoken to or observed him until he added, "Dang it, it's just like her."

"Just like who?" asked the captain, who had not quite recovered from his blank amazement on receiving this acquisition to his crew.

"The last one, sir; had seven, and all of 'em dead—seven fine girls—and she looks like the last one."

A queer thought came into the captain's head, he was not very fond of children. "Look here, Trevor," he said, "if you'll take the child and take good care of it, I'll excuse you from duty till we get home—then if you like you can keep it. No doubt all that belong to it have gone to the bottom; it had rich ones, anyhow, whoever they were, for look at that dress—my creation! but it must have cost! Gold pins too, or what d'ye call em's—see, that's to pay you for your trouble, you shall have them all, Trevor;" and as if he had done a very magnanimous thing in giving away what was not his own, the captain motioned to Trevor to take it, which he very tenderly did with a tear still standing in his eye. It seemed utterly exhausted—but the humane care of the sailors in supplying it with weak water and wine, and feeding it as it grew stronger with biscuit dipped in a solution called tea, soon revived the little stranger. It shared Jack's rude bunk—it slept in his arms, and learned to smile at and cry for him. He even taught it to walk, and strengthened its little limbs with ablutions of salt water—so that through lack of that tenderness with which the wealthy enervate their offspring, it grew surprisingly—and the slight tan of sun and wind did not render it a whit less beautiful. The rough sailor even learned to make it clothes; and a few of the captain's shirts were converted into nice dresses for the daintily born babe.

CHAPTER VII.

JACK TREVOR'S HOME.

Straight into the little parlor whose tiny shelf shone with glittering sea-moss and bits of pearl, whose empty fire-place was garnished all over with huge conk-shells, and upon whose neat little table in the centre stood a miniature "navy ship," the work of Jack Trevor's own hands, into that very parlor one sunny, summer's afternoon Jack Trevor burst, as soon as he could disengage himself from the coach, with his young prize in his arms, rejoicing in a large blue bonnet and bright red dress which the honest tar had bought for the child.

"Meroy on me, Jack," exclaimed his delicate wife, recoiling a pace or two, "where did you get that—that baby?" This was after she had rushed wildly into his arms and almost smothered the little one in kissing him—but baby by this time was accustomed to rude handling.

"Now where do you think?" asked Jack, attempting a droll look, which sat in comic grandeur on his queer little face.

"I'm sure, Jack—what *should* I think—I—I'm sure—whose is it?"

"Yours," exclaimed the sailor, as bounce went the baby into her lap; and before she had quite time to scream out, she had felt the pressure of the dear, velvet cheek—and whoever it might originally have been she cared not, but held it to her bosom and wept.

"Now that's putty," said Jack, with something like a smile distorting his features, while the tears came rolling from his eyes—"that's fine! guess I'll bring you another present soon. You needn't hug it so powerful, nobody 'll take it from you—found it out at sea in a boat—relations all dead and drowned—handsome dress and gold thingumgigs—guess they was desperately rich, anyhow; poor baby, poor baby, ain't you glad you've got a mother anyhow?"

"And did you really find it, Jack, out at sea? poor, dear thing; only to think—was it a wreck?"

"Well, I should *reckon* it was suthin' o' that kind," answered the tar, gazing admiringly on the natural manner in which Mrs. Trevor "took to" the babe—"but ain't you got any news? How's old Salem prospered since I've been gone? Ah! ha! Susy, there you are, my darling," and a pretty rosy face was held temptingly up, and as any gallant sailor would have done, Jack kissed it.

"I didn't expect you so soon, uncle," said his little niece, very much astonished just that moment at beholding the baby—"why, where did you get *that*?"

"Only think, my dear, he found it; found it out at sea," cried Mrs. Trevor, almost breathless with delight, "ain't there something about her, now, that looks like little Marie?" she added, almost ready to cry again—"look, it's trying to get on the floor—la! I thought it was such a little thing it couldn't walk—there! do see now."

Thus saying, she watched in great triumph while the babe steadily moved toward Jack, and held up its chubby arms to be taken.

"There's arms for you," cried Jack, lingering, although Susy repeatedly said that dinner was ready, "there's arms for you—there's legs—

there's the tetotalest, cunningest little feet—and if its face ain't a beauty, what *is* a beauty? Only you look at that hair," and he twined a slight, glossy look about his thick forefinger—"only see them great eyes, bless 'em, look at them dimples, and them, Lor' bless us, ain't her cheeks like the red streaks on an apple? Ain't she a prize, hey—ain't she a handsome one? I don't believe there's a baby in the United States can beat her," saying which, holding her over his shoulder, he went out to dinner.

The babe, whom they named Marie, thrived wonderfully. All the good wife's care was for her; and it seemed as if Providence had sent the child to lay hold of her heart ere sorer, deeper trouble came to her humble but happy hearth. For before Jack went his next voyage, which was to be his last, he said, pretty Susy also went over the seas to become the wife of a missionary, and from that *last* voyage Jack never returned.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SLOP-SHOP CLERK.

"I'LL tell you what, ma'am, you may think yourself well off to get that price—why we only give ordinary-looking people—my good woman," said the coarse clerk, leaning over the counter, and peering under the neat, little black bonnet with a look that sickened the heart of his listener, "we only give ordinary-looking people one and sixpence—but our genteel and pretty customers, my dear, if they suit us, as no doubt *you* would, we give *two* and sixpence; a marked difference, you see."

The woman, who *was* young and withal good-looking, was so thoroughly heart sick and wearied that she could have borne anything but marked insult, taken *any* price for the work which laid neatly folded on the counter. She hardly heard the conclusion of the clerk's speech, but drawing a beautiful child closely to her side, and leaning against a post affixed to the counter, she said faintly, "Give me what you think proper for the shirts—I did my best—put two rows of stitching in each plait and ironed them very smoothly—and if you'll be kind enough to give me the pay for these—"

"Bless us, madam! we make it a point never to pay—*never*, on *no* account, till the whole batch is done—I think you took twelve. But I'll tell you what it is," he added, impudently laying his hand where it touched hers, and brought the blood tingling to her cheek, though she would not appear to notice the indignity, "*you* shall have the change. It's a particular favor, you know—*you* know it's what we don't often do, only where

re—where we hem—take a—that is, where our customers *particularly* please us," he added, in an altered tone, suddenly abashed by a look from under the little black bonnet, from which the veil was hastily drawn.

"Ain't she a handsome one though?" he asked himself, straining his eyes after her retreating figure; "*must* be a widow—one child—poor, reduced and so forth. Hold up the prices awhile, come down through hard times, and she can't stand it long, ha, ha, we'll give her a penny per sheet and the cotton to find, *Stewart prices*," he added, rubbing his hands; "*starvation prices*, that's how we come it over the good-looking ones, and so—and so they, they're willing to eat their pride at last—hang it, they deserve to come down, why don't they behave themselves? What do they look a fellow out of his senses for if he says a pretty thing? Mighty high, now it's just laughable to see them sport their lofty looks—but hunger 'll bring 'em up, especially them that has children, they either come to terms or die slap off, leaving their handsome babies to starve or be brought up by the city. I can find many a one on the street, though, that scorned to be spoken to by me years ago—ha, ha, slop-work is the general leveller—slop-work makes brisk business for the city-fathers, it's the grand sewer of the nineteenth century, it empties all the trash down," saying which with a grin, he resumed his chalk and marked a skeleton figure on the stout blue cloth before him, destined to take in some unsuspicious son of Neptune, perchance to be wet with saltier brine than that of the wide, cheerless ocean.

Grasping her little Marie tightly by the hand, the sailor's widow walked shyly but hurriedly through the great city. First she called at a baker's and bought two large loaves; and though the child asked it not, a penny's worth of sweet cakes; and then turning into a dismally narrow and dirty street, stopped before one of its old houses, and timidly moved through a group of coarse Irishmen into the entry, up, up, up four long flights of creaking stairs, into a back chamber neat and clean, but scantily furnished. There she proceeded to take off Marie's tidy little bonnet of black, her dress of threadbare silk, her little polished gaiters, and substituted a plain cotton apron and worn shoes. Then she went through the same form with herself, talking and smiling to the little Marie in an absent kind of way, while every few moments she wiped the tears from her eyes.

Whatever the old room was, the child made it seem beautiful. She was a lovely creature with her milk-white forehead and great, soft blue

eyes, filled to the brim with love. Her hair hung like skeins of gold just rippling with a slight curl over the fair, rosy cheeks and dimpled shoulders. Each time the widow looked at her a new light came over her care-worn face, though in a moment the great burden of unspoken sorrow resumed its old resting-place.

The child prattled about, a little while, after the scanty tea had been served, while the widow taking from the closet a heavy bundle, unrolled it and sorted out the several parts of a linen shirt: and still at ever everything she did the tears fell heavily. After the child laid its head upon the pillow dreaming happy dreams, the poor woman threw by her work and sobbed aloud, "It's almost gone," she said, in broken accents, "the money Jack left is almost gone, and I'm going too; I feel it here, in my heart, I'm going very fast, and what will become of her? She's such a pretty creature," she murmured, looking at the sleeping cherub, "that somebody will be kind to her for her beauty's sake—but how will it be when she has grown to womanhood?"

"It may not be so bad with me," she added, after a long pause, pressing her hand to her heart, "but this burning fever—this beating pulse—this hollow cough—these deathly feelings at night when I spring from my sleep with the damp, cold sweat on my forehead—oh, God! in mercy hear my prayer! If I am to die, Father in heaven, in mercy provide a home for my innocent darling before I go."

Again she resumed,

"How cruel it was in him to taunt me so! cruel, cruel to give us toilsome work of pain and labor; to make us sit from day's dawn till the night, and give us scarcely enough to buy bread for our children; and then insult us because the land that protected us once lies in the cold grave, and we have none to care for us."

God help you all, widows, in great and hardened cities! If you are strangers in a strange land, few indeed will come to your hearth where the brands of human love are turned into grey white ashes, and hope cowers like a starved mendicant counting the rents in his tattered garments. Many a time must the spirits sink like lead, cold, heavy and palpable; and the chill of the heart's fever, seldom succeeded by a glow, alas! freeze up even love itself. Through a thousand channels the bitterness of the unfeeling world will flow in, and quench, if it can, even the desire of honesty; so that life must be hereafter but a living death—and death a hideous tormentor that points only to unending gloom. But however much the glitter of gold may shut out

eternity to the cold, unfeeling eye of wealth, there is a time of reckoning coming to all men—look to it ye who traffic in human souls!

CHAPTER IX.

CARE AND LABOR.

DAY after day the widow toiled, but her strength failed her rapidly. She was soon obliged to take in coarser work, of flannel and cotton texture: and no longer able to carry them home herself, a poor neighbor, a rough but kindly-hearted girl, volunteered to go for her, and also to do any little favor in the way of errands, taking care of Marie, or whatever the sickly woman could not herself attend to.

"For I'm sure she's a nice, decent body," she exclaimed to her mother, on coming one day from Mrs. Trevor's little room, "she's a nice, decent, and a clever one too, I know. It makes my heart ache, it does, to see her look so healthy-like—her cheeks redder than mine—redder even than Miss Mitten's, the milliner's who puts paint on and no mistake—and yet she can't hardly ever walk across the floor. If she only had a husband to earn what little pa does, and even we, altogether can but just make out, and me braiding straw and you making duck trousers," she added, in a parenthesis, "though to be sure we might more than make the pot boil if pa didn't drink—but poor soul there she sits, meek and quiet as a lamb, and never complains, and I know blessed well she must be hungry often enough, because when I carried in that soup yesterday her eyes sparkled up—my! as if she hadn't had anything to eat for a month."

Seeing the man come by with huckleberries, the good girl snatched up a sixpence she had been saving in the corner of her drawer for a week, toward buying a new comb, and laid it out in berries for the sailor's widow and her little charge. After delicately presenting them, she noticed that Marie had been crying bitterly; that her eyes were red, and her little bosom heaved with hardly repressed sobs.

"Poor thing," said the widow, glancing up from her work with blazing cheeks, and eyes that almost burnt one to look at, "poor thing, she has been begging so hard to go out, and I daren't let her without me, for you know what the children are in this neighborhood, it sickens me to hear their oaths, and I would rather die than expose her to such dreadful things."

"What'll she do after —?" began the girl, but suddenly she bethought herself of her bluntness, and left her speech unfinished.

"After I am gone you would say," answered

the widow, looking up calmly, "somehow I don't seem to fear for her then. It appears to me as if God would stretch forth his arm," she added, with solemn emphasis, "and take her under His protection. It looks as clear as sunlight," she went on talking to herself, "for all her great beauty, her utter helplessness, and her being a girl, I don't seem to have the least fear. Ever since that night I prayed to God I have been at rest. What will happen, or how it will happen I don't know, and I scarcely think of it. And when the time comes—though it will be hard to leave her—yet

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

"Well, *I never!*" exclaimed poor Sally, vehemently blowing her nose and rubbing her eyes violently, "how you can talk of dying so, and never feel frightened nor nothing—well, *there!* I couldn't feel so to my dying day."

"It's because I'm a Christian, Sally, and *true!* Christians never fear death, because it's the opening of a new life to them, and not the cold grave they look at. They feel as sure of waking with a new body, and new powers, as you feel of seeing the dawn of another day, or perhaps I should say, as little dread that they shall not wake up in eternity."

"It's past my comprehension," said Sally, with another gruff demonstration of feeling—"but I was going to say, *Miss Trevor*, that if you wanted any work carried home, I've done up my ironing, and I'll go for you *now*; and if that fellow gives me any more impudence about my cheeks or eyes, I'll slap him right in the face, *that I will!*"

"Then I shouldn't get any more work," said the widow, with a faint smile.

"No more you wouldn't," replied the girl, softly, "but can't a body show that she ain't to be put upon? Impudent puppies, they think, some of them ninnybobs do, that because a girl ain't rich, or educated, or such things, that she ain't got proper self-respect. Only let 'em *try* to give any more insulting speeches, and I'll get my Jo, if he hasn't waited on me more in a month, to jest go there and give him the best horsewhipping *he* ever had—and he's had more than one, *I'll be bound!*"

Saying this, she left the room to run opposite and fetch her bonnet—then as she held the roll of work in her arm, a sudden thought seemed to strike her.

"It's real pleasant," she exclaimed, lingering at the door, "maybe you wouldn't trust her with me, but I won't let go her hand one't; and she looks so pale."

"This she said pointing to Marie, in whose eyes, as they were raised with an anxious, inquiring gaze to the face of the widow, a gleam of light had been kindled.

"I'll bring her back as careful—as careful—as—gold, if you'll let her, and I'll dress her, she looks nice enough—only a bonnet—may she!"

To this the widow assented, pointing to the closet where the child's better clothes—though sadly worn at the best—were kept, and Sally proceeded with great alacrity to put them on.

Tucking the yellow ringlets very carefully within the faded bonnet, the widow gave many a charge to Sally, and kissing her darling, sent her, for the first time, out of her presence, then wearily moved about to provide their homely supper.

An hour elapsed—Mrs. Trevor had sat down to the table long ago in momentary expectation of her darling; but finding she did not appear, gave herself up to anxious care, and foreboded every accident that ever has happened to children in the crowded streets from time immemorial. Flushed and haggard by turns, she alternately looked from her narrow casement into the courtway, and moved with ill-boding alacrity to one as weak as she, down the many stairs into the passage, and gazed up the street for her child.

"Something *must* have happened," she cried, bursting into tears, as she sought the room where Sally's mother lived—"oh! what shall I do?"

"You needn't fret if my darter's got her in charge," said the old lady, in a tremulous voice, "she's the carefullest creeter about such things you ever see. Why only think! two dozen clear stretched to-day, and not a wrinkle or a scratch on one; she's an uncommon gal, Sally is—and bless my soul, turn your face right round, for that's she, sure as we had mush and milk this mornin' for breakfast."

Yes, it was "she," and Marie with her, looking so radiantly happy, with a little paper bag twisted at the top in each hand, her cheeks dotted with dimples, and the eager, good news almost bursting from her widely dilated eyes, while Sally, with a look of much importance, stood by with mouth wide open, and a vastly pleased face.

"Why have you been so long, my darling?" exclaimed the widow, throwing her thin, fleshless arms about the body of the beautiful child, and folding her to her bosom.

"To the nice lady, mamma; and she give me this—and this for you—and she will come here, too, to see you, mamma. Look—taste."

Mrs. Trevor turned to Sally, and the good girl related quite a little adventure. She had been to the shop, she said, got the money and some more work, and was just coming away, when Marie, attracted by a hand organ and a monkey dancing on the pavement, pressed her to stand and hear the music ever so little a minute. A rich-looking and handsome lady sat at one of the grand windows, who as soon as she caught sight of the child stared at her quite earnestly, and in a little after sent a fine-looking serving man—she supposed it was a serving man, though he was dressed quite genteelly—to ask her if she wouldn't bring the child in just a minute for the lady to see.

"Well," continued Sally, "I thought it wouldn't be no harm, so in we posted, pet and I, into one of the splendidest-looking places you ever did see—and it wasn't only the entry too—but there was figgers there and pictures, and red and yeller glass, and a shandeler, and a carpet that was too good to tread on, and gold things on the stairs, and gold things on the walls, and I declare if the paper wasn't all gold too. But they carried us further in—and there, my goodness creation! I couldn't tell you what *wasn't* there, it looked grander than a jeweler's shop, and I didn't hardly darst to set down on such fine things as them sopy's, and I didn't hardly darst to look, nor to speak, nor to breathe. Then the lady she took Marie, and began to talk to her, and undone her bonnet so the hair all come down; then she looked kind o' sad enough, and took out a little gold locket with a face in it, and kept saying, 'how very like!' I thought she never would have done kissing and talking to her—and pet, she took it all jest as natural as if 'twas her right, and so who cares? What, *she* afraid? no, no, she jest looked round at the fine things as she does on the old walls here at home; and she sat on the lady's knee and played with her handsome curls, and talked away till I up and said, 'I was sorry, but wan't she afraid her ma might be uneasy, and she sick, you know.'"

"Her ma—who is her mother?" she asked.

"So I made bold to put in a word about you, ma'am; how that you was sick, and—and—and—"

"And I suppose you told her how very poor I was?" added the widow, sadly—"but then what did she say?"

"Why not in so many words exactly I didn't tell her *that*, but she said she must come round to-morrow and see you; that she was very fond of children, and Marie particular put her in mind of *somebody*—and her face had such a

dreadful, sorrowful kind of look, that I somehow couldn't bear to see it. So she'll be here to-morrow, and here's the work—two pockets more to put in, and not another cent for the trouble. I *do* think them bare-faced men ought to be screwed up to a crust and cold water; there, I *do*. But never mind—I shall git through work sooner to-morrow, and *I'll* put them extra pockets in—they shan't git it out of *you*."

"Thank you, Sally, you are very, *very* kind," murmured the widow, faintly, taking Marie's hand and leading her to their room, "it will be but a little while longer, and then I shall need no help," she added, in an undertone—and indeed her trembling limbs and ashy paleness—her hurried, painful breathing betokened the near termination of all her earthly sorrows.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE SIN OF PROFANITY. A TRUE STORY.

BY FITZ MORNER.

GEORGE FERGUSON was a young man of great promise; his friends all said so; his enemies all said so; and he was perfectly well aware of the fact. The "right of suffrage" had been his but three years, when he was called upon to take the editorial charge of a paper of an independent and reformatory character which was ushered into existence in the town of B—. Prosperity was his, and the *Recorder* soon obtained a large circulation. But there soon after appeared another sheet in B—, which became quite as popular, in a short time, as his own. The *Gazette* "picked flaws" in the *Recorder's* manners, and argued fiercely on matters of the utmost importance to the nation; while the editors of the two were on the most amicable terms imaginable, privately. But of this nothing has a bearing upon my tale.

It was a cold morning in the winter of 18—, when Mr. Ferguson bounced into the store of an elderly friend, with a "Good morning, Mr. Williams!"

"Ah! good morning, friend Ferguson; how are you?"

"Well, I'm so-so," said George, rubbing his hands over the stove; "but it's a d—d cold morning, ain't it?"

"What did you say?" said Williams, gravely, as he looked over his desk at our friend. "Really, I do not know how cold *that* is; but it should be very, *very* cold, George, before I would use such an exclamation."

"Do you mean to insult me?" said Ferguson, with a flashing eye.

"Insult you? By no means; is it an insult for me to direct your attention to your own language? Indeed, do you not think, George, that it is a grand mistake you have made in not preserving your language so pure that it might be free for comment, on all occasions?"

"Mr. Williams, what do you mean? I do not understand this! Are you joking me?—or what is it?"

"Joking, George!—and on *such* a subject. Far from it. I am aware that my conduct is very strange to you; but George Ferguson, listen to me! I have known you for years—ever since you ran at your mother's side in frock and hat—

I have tossed you upon my knee—I have watched your progress from infancy—and of late years I have observed your inclination to profanity in language, and now, George, I am willing and anxious to show you what a folly you commit. The habit is gaining upon you to a fearful extent, and I wish to warn you of it. Will you listen?"

As he spoke, Mr. Williams laid aside his pen and advanced from behind his desk. Mr. Ferguson made an evasive answer; avowed his willingness to consider the thing, but plead haste, and invited his friend to call at the office in the afternoon, when he would be more at leisure.

"No, no, George, I do not wish to give you a lecture, and I will detain you but a moment. Will you hear me?"

Mr. Ferguson nodded assent.

"In the first place, then, you know, do you not, that you *are* addicted to this habit of profanity?"

Another nod.

"And, knowing this, there are many reasons why you should break yourself of it, at all hazards. First and foremost, it is a violation of God's holy commandment—'for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.' Next, there is no *gratification* arising from it, as from all, or nearly all, other sins. There is nothing tempting in its appearance, and, look at it as you will, there is no excuse whatever for it. A man steals, perhaps, from want; he lies that he may screen himself from punishment; he breaks the Sabbath that he may revel in pleasure; but he swears—for what? Nothing! Men, reputedly respectable men, too, daily commit one of the most fearful sins noticed in the Bible—blasphemy and insult that mighty One who holds their lives in His hand—for no earthly reason but indiscretion. And further, I have had frequent occasion, George, to notice the effect of this thing in your business, and I can assure you that, in a merely worldly sense, it is deteriorating to your interests. I could tell you of many a dollar you have lost by this very habit. There was Mr. Hughes, now, who had the direction of the printing of Dr. Morgan's discourse. You remember what a feeling was produced in his congregation some time since,

by a powerful sermon on the vicious tendencies of theatres; and you remember equally well that many thousand copies were printed for circulation. Now I know, George, that those pamphlets were meant to be done at your office. But as Mr. Hughes and Mr. Allenford were talking on the superior beauty of your work Mr. Hughes said he should feel wrong in entrusting such a job to a person addicted to profanity."

"Well, if men choose to be so foolish, let them," angrily interrupted Ferguson.

"But the *fact* is as urgent, and if men avoid you because you displease them, then you must change your ways, if their friendship is of any importance to you. But no man can be blamed for objecting to subjecting the minds of their children to being led to a disregard of precepts contained in your paper, by the well-known fact that you, their propounder, are addicted to profanity. You know, as well as I or they, Mr. Ferguson, that such apparently insignificant matters do undoubtedly have a bearing on the morals of the young. You do not see men swear at an evening party, do you? And *you* would not swear in the presence of Dr. Morgans, or Rev. Mr. Howard; which shows plainly that you are as well aware of the fact as anybody."

"Yes, Mr. Williams," said Ferguson, as that gentleman paused, "I am aware of it—well aware. But do you not know that it is a very hard matter to refrain?"

"Yes, I suppose it is, very. Yet men do it. It is said to be as difficult to conquer the habit, as to break off from the use of tobacco or ardent spirits; but this I do not believe."

"But it is true, Mr. Williams. In fact I believe it is harder. A man has command over his muscles, and, as the Quaker advised, may keep his hand wide open when tempted to drink, and so disable himself from conveying the thing to his mouth. But in this case the muscles have no part—it is the *will*. A man may keep his hand open, and yet swear like a trooper. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Don't laugh, George; the subject is a serious one, and demands serious consideration. However, I can give you as good a rule as the Quaker's, if it can so apply; although I fear as mind controls muscle the remedy is a poor one. But, if you wish to try it—whenever you are tempted to swear, keep your mouth shut!"

"But, Mr. Williams, an oath falls from one's lips as easily as breath heaves from one's lungs. I should never swear at all if I had time to think of it beforehand, and I am not half the time aware when I *do* swear."

"Did you ever resolve, firmly and resolutely, that you *would* cease? Did you ever make one *real energetic effort* to shake off the habit?"

"No—never. It is a fact. Because I never saw very forcibly any reason for it. I know that it is wrong—and yet there is no feeling of guilt in my mind, similar to that which follows a theft or a falsehood. But I cannot stay longer, Mr. Williams. Good morning."

"Good morning!"

Mr. Ferguson walked down the street wrapped in profound meditation, and so absorbed was he that he passed his office some rods ere he discovered his mistake. As he wheeled about to retrace his steps, an oath fell from his tongue. He bit his lip with vexation, for he now observed it, and instantly he cursed his own carelessness—thus again sinning. It is thus that the habit manifests itself when once acquired. Our swearer saw fully the magnitude of his vice, and he determined to "wrestle with the madman," like the fabled Greek, until he should dash him over the precipice.

For two weeks Mr. Ferguson strove resolutely with his failing, but with little apparent progress. He broached the subject to his wife, and she (women are always right on such matters) fully agreed with him that it was his duty, before God and before man, to conquer himself. It was the want of a deep, firm, sensible conviction of the fearfulness of his sin that prevented him from doing so.

One cold, windy day in March, Mr. Ferguson came in from the street, and banging the door after him, ran up to the stove, snapping his fingers, and exclaimed, with an oath,

"How cold it is out doors, Mary!"

"Hush, George; here is Dr. Morgans!"

Ferguson fairly jumped. He stood in astonishment a moment and gazed incredulously at the clergyman, who, for his part, was as greatly astonished as himself—not at the recollection, but at the language he had heard. Recovering his composure, he saluted the abashed young man with a kind "Good morning," and extended his hand.

The salutation was returned in a very embarrassed tone, and the two were for some moments silent. At length George spoke—

"What shall I say for myself, Dr. Morgans?"

"Say, God forgive me, and enable me to avoid ever using such language again while I live!"

"I have said that, in substance, long ago," said George, "and it is not enough. I cannot keep a resolution which is merely spoken with the lips, without being felt on the heart as well."

"But, Mr. Ferguson, why do you not so feel it?" said the clergyman.

"Because, (I suppose) I am not thoroughly imbued with a feeling of the necessity of such a step—which, however, my friends unite in telling me, is great. Can you suggest a remedy for my sin? If so, I will listen with gratitude to what you may say."

"I am placed in a delicate position, notwithstanding, Mr. Ferguson; it is seldom that I have to endeavor to convince a person of your standing, that he is living in the practice of one of the most enormous vices we behold."

"Enormous! Excuse me, but is not that an extravagant word, doctor?"

"Not at all, Mr. Ferguson; by no means. And here you at once advance evidence corroboratory of what you just stated—want of appreciation of the extent of your sin. Is it not an enormity which is actually frightful to behold, that men can listen to Gospel truths week after week; can deliberately and feelingly respond, God have mercy on us, and incline our hearts to keep this law; can ejaculate every Sabbath day, *Hallowed be thy name*, and then go out into the world and mock these truths, and break that law, and shame that prayer, by using God's holy name in light and frivolous conversation?"

"Strange! that this never occurred to me before!" breathed George.

"Again, do you consider, Mr. Ferguson, that every time you use the name of God in vain, the exclamation is a prayer, not meant for such indeed, but still, for all you know, accepted as such? Suppose that the words are borne up to the throne of Almighty God as a prayer—then, oh! how many souls have you prayed the Supreme Being to consign to everlasting damnation! If God should hear and answer those prayers, how many of your friends would find an eternity of torment!"

Mr. Ferguson started from his chair and paced the room. He was evidently agitated. The clergyman pursued,

"Oh! my dear sir, I fear for you, as for all those who are addicted to this dreadful habit.

What will be their portion in eternity? *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain! the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain!*"

"Why have I not felt this before?" groaned Mr. Ferguson. "How could a man be so foolish? Preposterous!" and, after a pause, "but true!"

"My brother, you are wiser. You see guilt more plainly, do you not?"

"I do; but how am I to avoid it?" said Ferguson.

"Rather ask, how can I sin again? Of this rest assured, my friend, he that abhors an oath will never use one. Learn to look upon the thing with terror, and you can never give utterance to one without shuddering at the act. Thus you are safe. Never write, nor repeat, nor think an oath, and you will eventually learn to regard it with as deep repugnance as you did in your childhood. There is no other way."

Mr. Ferguson paced the room in silence. The scene was becoming painful, and Dr. Morgans rose to take his leave.

"Remember, now, my friend," said he, as he offered his hand, "in this lies your hope. Shun an oath as you would a snake, for oh! it is a deadlier foe to your well-being, and its fangs are more poisonous than serpent's ever were. Good morning!"

As he retreated from the doorway he repeated, as though reluctant to leave the subject, in a solemn tone, "*The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain!*"

As Mr. Ferguson turned to his wife, she met him with an encouraging smile.

Without a word in reply, Mr. Ferguson retired to his study, and knelt in prayer. God heard it, and blessed the suppliant.

The next number of the *Recorder* contained a powerful article on the sin of profanity, and from that day the business of the firm increased. A tone of morality soon settled upon George Ferguson, which resulted in his eventually becoming pious and honored.

THE BARTONS.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

CHAPTER I.

"~~There~~ is no use in talking, Gustavus, I have chosen a cap for Charlie, and he shall wear no other."

"Don't be unreasonable and obstinate, Emily: I wish him to wear the cap which I have selected."

"It cannot be," said the lady, decidedly. "I would not show my want of taste by putting a *blue* cap and *purple* mantle on my child."

"But you will make your child hideous by clothing him in such showy colors; when you know that both, the green especially, makes his delicate complexion look sallow and sickly."

"Every one I saw yesterday said he looked beautiful; and when I first tried on the cap at the store, Mr. J—— said it was the most becoming one imaginable."

"Of course. What else would he say when he saw it was your choice? If I had been there you should not have had it."

"That would make but little difference: if Charlie cannot be supplied with a cap from his papa's store, there are plenty other stores where he can be suited."

"I tell you, madam," said the husband, with increasing anger, "you shall not disfigure Charlie in such a manner. Dress the babe as you please, make it as frightful-looking as you can—but in Charlie's dress I *will* have a voice."

"Dress the babe as I please!" repeated the wife, mockingly, "and what, I pray you, is a child of four years but a babe? No; when he is a few years older I will cheerfully admit your right to select his apparel; while he is a little child, I prefer to use my own taste in such matters."

"You know as well as I do that blue is the most becoming color to a child like Charlie; and I do believe," added he, petulantly, "that if I had not happened to express a preference for it, it would have been your choice."

"Oh, surmise and believe as you will; he shall wear the cap which I have chosen and no other."

"He shall wear it, you say?" reiterated the husband, sternly.

"He shall wear it!" repeated the wife, with calm decision.

"Then, madam, all I have to say is this, and I wish you to understand it distinctly," rejoined the now thoroughly enraged husband, emphasizing every word, "the day that next sees Charlie Barton in the street with that green cap on his head, will also witness our immediate and lasting separation."

"Then this day will witness both," was the wife's rejoinder.

"I have made up my mind to this course," resumed Mr. Barton, "so make your choice accordingly. I am weary of continual disagreement—there must be an end of it."

"As soon as you please, I am also weary of it, and will not dispute the point with you. We are not suited to each other—the wisest plan is to part."

"And that plan will be acted upon. I have suffered enough from your ill-temper and obstinacy, and will hear no more:" and the incensed man left the dining-room while his wife was replying.

"No, you would prefer a more submissive victim to your tyranny," and she also left the room to prepare for her accustomed morning walk.

The marriage of Gustavus Barton and Emily Sanders had been, as their sentimental friends declared, "one of true love." A gay, handsome girl, entering on her seventeenth year, Emily had become acquainted with the equally gay and handsome Gustavus, who had just attained his majority; both fell in love at first sight, and their mutual attachment was soon revealed. Mrs. Sanders was pained by her daughter's precipitancy in a matter of so much importance. She listened with a smile half of pleasure, half of sad incredulity, to the vehement protestations of eternal love and constancy with which both the lovers met her objections to their speedy union, based on their youth and inexperience. However, to the object of her daughter's choice she could make no objection. Old Mr. Barton had established his son in a business connection with an extensive and prosperous firm; the young man's pecuniary prospects therefore were good—his moral character unexceptionable. So, not

without some natural misgivings, Mrs. Sanders yielded consent; and the day on which Emily completed her seventeenth year she was united to her happy lover. The wedding was an elegant affair. Mrs. Sanders was in easy circumstances, and having until her husband's decease mingled much in gay society, had a large circle of fashionable friends who graced the nuptials with their presence. The Bartons, too, with their aristocratic connections were there, smiling graciously on the fair, blushing bride. A beautiful house was presented to the young pair by old Mr. Barton for their residence; its rich and elegant furniture was a gift from the mother of the bride; and the happy couple entered on their wedded life without a cloud in all its bright horizon. During the five years that intervened until the day on which our story opens fortune had smiled upon them. Gustavus prospered in his business, and was looked upon as a man destined to achieve great wealth and influence. Emily was as handsome and admired as ever; and but for the death of her mother, which occurred about two years after her marriage, had known no cause of sorrow. Two lovely children frolicked within their beautiful home, and in the eyes of the envious world the Bartons were the happiest of the happy.

But it has been said there is a skeleton in every house, and theirs was no exception to the rule: for the happiness that might have been as unalloyed as ever falls to the lot of mortals, was disturbed by scenes of constant altercation and discord. The merest trifles gave rise to contentions, which were sustained on either side with equal perseverance, as if they were ingeniously seeking some means of self-torture, until they, surrounded by every earthly blessing, came to regard themselves as among the most unfortunate and ill-fated of beings. The poet has said truly,

"The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something every day they live
To pity and perhaps forgive."

But forbearance was a word poetically unknown to our friends; *self-pity* was indeed indulged to an extent that rendered them the more exacting and irritable; and forgiveness, though some times graciously and gracefully extended, afford no guarantee of future caution or amenity.

The dispute concerning the *green* and *blue* caps affords a sample of the sinful folly by which domestic peace may be embittered and destroyed. Little Charlie was the pride of both parents, and it was a matter of consequence that he should appear to the best advantage to others. Blue

was Mr. Barton's favorite color, and the preceding winter the child was dressed in accordance with his taste. But Mrs. Barton could not think of arraying her darling in the same color for two successive winters, even though it was the most becoming to his frail, delicate beauty; moreover a lady who was regarded as a model of taste had selected a purple velvet mantle, and green velvet cap and plume for her little boy, and Emily resolved to imitate her choice. The father immediately objected to the green cap, and brought from his store one of rich blue with a handsome plume, which the mother protested Charlie should not wear: the subject was renewed several times with increased asperity, until, as we have seen, it led to a threat of final separation.

Alas! that the love once so warm and tender could be weakened to such an extent by petty disagreements! Yet weakened it undoubtedly was, for the silken chain had long weighed heavily as one of iron, and the severance of its galling links seemed the only means of regaining peace and happiness. Three hours after that decisive conversation, Mrs. Barton, dressed in the most elegant style, and leading little Charlie with his purple mantle and green cap, by the hand, was slowly pacing the fashionable street with a friend whom she had met during a morning call. Emily was in her gayest mood. During the past hour compliments extravagant enough to satisfy even her most exacting vanity had been lavished upon her fair boy; and she was chatting merrily as if no thought of care had ever crossed her mind, when Charlie suddenly exclaimed gleefully, "Oh, here comes papa!" and with secret uneasiness she saw her husband in company with another merchant, coming toward them. As they met, both gentlemen politely raised their hats, but at the same instant, a gleam of suppressed anger shot to Mr. Barton's eyes, which had just noticed the unfortunate green cap, and without a word he passed on. By a great effort Emily preserved her gay manner until she parted with her companion, when returning home without delay, she dismissed Charlie to the nursery, and began arranging her personal effects as if for immediate removal. While she was thus occupied, Gustavus hastily entered. He glanced around at the disordered apartment, then turned a scrutinizing regard upon his wife, who, continuing her task, cast upon him an occasional glance of inquiry. At last he spoke.

"You have not forgotten, I presume, what was said this morning?"

"No; I have not forgotten it," was the brief reply.

"Your resolution is then taken?"

"It is."

"And so is mine; let things take their course."

His voice was husky with grief and anger, and he paced the apartment several times rapidly, as if seeking to keep down the struggling emotions. Then opening a bureau-drawer he drew forth papers, glanced carelessly at them, and replacing them, turned more calmly to Emily.

"These are the title deeds of the houses."

"I have no need of them," interrupted Emily, haughtily.

"You are aware that they were purchased for you and the children, and the income accruing therefrom will probably be of some little use." He paused an instant, then added, "For the rest, as soon as I can arrange my affairs, half of what I possess will be at your command; give me the address of the person who will act as your agent."

"When your children are grown up, of course you will do your duty by them. At present I need no assistance in maintaining them."

Emily spoke quietly but firmly, and for a time nothing more was said.

"Why cannot you remain in this house?" asked the husband, at length. "I will never trouble you with my presence here again, if that is what you fear."

"No, I will not remain here," she rejoined, hastily. "After to-day the house will be at your disposal. The furniture I will take, as it was my mother's choice."

She broke off abruptly, for the recollection of her deceased parent brought tears to her eyes, and her hands trembled nervously as she continued her employment.

The husband's heart softened as he saw the gushing tears. He knew how deeply she had felt her mother's death; how she must miss her at this juncture: and for a moment he accused himself of perverseness, and half excused her; but he quickly hardened himself against the repentant impulse.

The door opened, and Charlie gayly bounded into the room. His father caught him in his arms, and gazed upon him with a mingled pleasure and pain. But the little fellow saw that his mother was grieved, and struggled to free himself from the close embrace.

"Won't you stay with me, Charlie?" asked the fond father, and there was deep mournfulness in his tone. "Mamma is going away—won't Charlie stay with papa?"

The child looked strangely from one to the other, but when the question was repeated, replied readily,

"No, I must go with mamma;" and gliding

from his father's relaxed grasp, was folded closely to his mother's bosom. She cast upon Gustavus an expression of half dread, half defiance.

"Fear not that I shall ever deprive you of him," he answered to that look with bitterness; "I have no longer wife nor child."

After a time he approached Emily, and extending his hand, said, with forced composure,

"At least, let us not part as enemies—good-bye!"

Emily's hand trembled as she placed it in his, but resolutely smothering her feelings, she responded to his good-bye with equal appearance of indifference. He again embraced little Charlie, who still holding to his mother with one arm, put the other around his father's neck, while his artless pleadings fell sadly upon the ears of the misguided ones. Gently Mr. Barton put away the encircling arm, and in a low tone asked where was "little sissie."

"In the nursery with Jane," replied the child, and the father departed to bestow a last caress on the petted babe.

Presently a light tap was heard at the door which was partly open, and Barton's voice called softly to his first born. The child hesitated, and it was not until his mother whispered "go," that he approached the door. Gustavus stood on the outside. He drew the child to his bosom, looked at him fondly with moistened eyes, as he whispered, "Charlie, you will never see papa again—won't you love him always when he is far away?" kissed him again and again with passionate tenderness; then suddenly taking his watch from his pocket, put it and his pocket-book into the tiny hands of the sorrowful and bewildered boy, sat him down on the threshold, and rushing down the stairs, the quick closing of the door announced to the listening wife that he had left the house. And she sprang to the window, gazing wistfully through the partially closed blinds after that familiar form until it passed from her longing sight; then gave vent to her long suppressed feelings in a burst of agony. Long she wept, heedless of the artless endearments of her distressed child; and when she became calmer, and with a return of infantile vivacity he showed her the beautiful watch and pocket-book filled with gold and bank notes "papa gave him," she pushed him from her side, and covered her face with her hands, sobbing in the convulsive agony of sorrow and self-upbraiding. Oh, peace of the human heart! how powerful art thou to work the misery of thy blinded victims!

The next morning Mrs. Barton with her children

left the city. A trusty domestic who was to remain in her service was directed to superintend the removal of the furniture to a small town, at some distance, where she intended for the future to reside.

Gustavus also had disappeared, having on the close of that eventful day, retired into the country, whence he wrote to his mother a full account of what had occurred. The old people were startled and grieved by the intelligence, but they found all attempts vain to bring about a meeting between the two so sadly estranged, which might lead to a reconciliation; for on returning from the country, Gustavus speedily made arrangements for a trip to Europe, and was soon "abroad on the Atlantic wave," far from the city which was filled with a thousand vague and contradictory rumors connected "with that strange affair of the Bartons."

CHAPTER II.

THE windows of a large, handsomely-furnished chamber were thrown open to the soft breezes of May, which, toying with the light lace curtains, admitted the golden day-beams in picturesque alternation with cool, deep shadows. From the garden beneath the sweet fragrance of early flowers came floating on the pure, balmy air, and from the clustering foliage of trees close by, the ravishing notes of bird-song filled the apartment with melody. Separated from the neighboring dwellings by its spacious garden, shut in amid shade trees, clambering vines, and blooming plants, the house though remarkable neither for design nor architectural beauty, presented an attractive aspect, which seemed to denote it the abode of simple and unpretending happiness; and the admiration of the passer by was doubtless often clouded by an emotion of envy toward the fortunate occupants.

Ah! how seldom can we judge rightly by appearances!

In the most dismal haunts of penury, in the dilapidated hovels which one passes quickly with a shudder of pity and disgust, none could be found more utterly oppressed with real heart-grief than the sad, tearful woman who, sitting in that pleasant room, surrounded by glad some sights and sounds, sees but one object—the suffering occupant of the couch by which she watches with patience that never wearies—with love stronger than death—with agony that wrings every fibre of her maternal heart. Not alone the unutterable anguish of the mother hovering o'er her suffering, dying child is hers—there is another feeling that renders more acute every pang—every trial.

How often during the delirium of fever did the piteous beseechings of the little patient for a joy that could never more be his, fall on her shuddering ears! How often after returning consciousness would the thin, wasted fingers tighten about hers—the blue eyes, now unnaturally large and brilliant, be raised imploringly to her anxious face—while the plaintive words, "Mamma, won't you send for papa to come to see Charlie—oh, when will he come home again?" would wake a new throb of anguish. Then would she clasp him convulsively in her arms with passionate caresses, whispering the while sweet words to comfort the affectionate child, while on her own wan brow the lines of care and sorrow already traced, grew deeper and more legible.

Few months had passed since she was moving in conscious pride amid gay and fashionable associates, yet how few of them could have recognized the lively and blooming Emily Barton in that sad, spiritless woman, wasted by secret sorrow and maternal solicitude? For many weary weeks little Charlie had been an invalid; hope alternately rose and fell in the anxious parent; now the last glimmer of hope had faded from her sinking soul, and the unclouded glory of advancing spring—the beauty of that lovely day mocked her with its cheerfulness, for a fearful presentiment haunted her through the rosy hours, that with the fall of night on nature's glories the darkness of bereavement would envelope her in gloomy clouds. And it was to be so. For when the animation with which the little invalid, so long confined to a sick bed, hailed the fair scene he had pined to look upon, had passed, the quickened pulse as if exhausted by its transient animation grew feebler and lower—a chill pallor took the place of the momentary flush of joy—and the signs of approaching dissolution became more fearfully evident.

'Twas after a long, restless sleep that the child suddenly started up and bent eagerly forward in a waiting posture, his dilated eyes fixed with wild intensity on the doorway, the breath coming quickly and with difficulty through the parted lips. A domestic with cautious tread entered the room. The child fell back upon his pillow with a sigh of disappointment, the light faded from his changing features; and with slow gathering tears he murmured, "Oh, I thought it was papa—I thought it was papa! Oh, why don't he come? mamma won't you send for him?" and checking his sobs he looked up to her with that yearning, eager expression peculiar to the dying. A sharp cry broke involuntarily from the wretched parent, and the wild burst of grief that would not

longer be stayed, for a moment compelled her to turn from the bed. It was the first time since early morning that he had uttered the words, which, all through that long, wasting sickness, had expressed his childish longings, and the mother's heart seemed breaking as she caught this pitiful request. Alas! the wide ocean rolled between the father and his dying child.

The affectionate little fellow saw her grief; his lip quivered again, and with his damp brow laying close to her cheek, he murmured softly, "Don't cry, dear mamma, don't cry!" till suddenly starting up with a new thought, he said eagerly, "papa will come home some time, won't you tell him Charlie was a good boy, and loved him so much, oh, so much." Again his little strength exhausted, he fell back rubbing his tiny hand over his mother's tear-bedewed face, as he continued whispering half unconsciously, "don't cry, my own sweet mamma!"

But the mother wept on long and bitterly without fear of disturbing the loving child, who now lay unconscious alike of her tears and caresses. Time passed on counting out the last hours of that brief young life; and from that death-like stupor little Charlie awoke amid the angels hosts of heaven.

Convinced at last that it was but the inanimate remains of her precious one on which she gazed with mournful intensity, the mother gently withdrew her arm from the dear head it had pillowed, and pressing one long kiss on the marble brow, bowed her head upon her clasped hands in silent prayer. Long had she prayed for strength in her impending trial; with agonized fervor had supplicated Him who holds death and life in His hands to spare her darling, or enable her to give him up uncomplainingly to a love deeper, fonder than even her yearning tenderness. During that long season of sorrow she had lived over much of her former life, realizing the sinfulness of the discontent she had indulged when surrounded by undeserved blessings; and the retrospect while it filled her with shame and remorse, awoke also the better feelings of her nature, which had so long lain useless and almost extinct beneath the rank weeds of pride and petulance. Hence, in this hour of darkness, when her attendants, knowing with what a passionate fondness she had regarded her fair and gentle boy, expected to see her overwhelmed with frantic grief, her sorrow deep and agonizing as it was, was yet tempered with Christian resignation and hope.

The beautiful remains of the angel Charlie were laid in the quiet church-yard not far from her dwelling, and thither would the bereaved mother often repair to weep and muse above the

hallowed spot. Of a fine summer afternoon she would take her little Emily, now a sprightly, winning child, whose lisping prattle wiled many a weary hour; and they would wander through the shady precincts of the "city of the dead;" or while sitting beside Charlie's grave the mother would talk of her lost angel to the little one, who with her head leaning on "mamma's" lap, and her large bright eyes filled with wondering thoughtfulness, would listen with unwearied interest to the oft-told tale. But when autumn came with "changing skies," the mother often deemed it prudent to leave Emily at home, and her visits to the grave-yard were now more sad and suggestive of mournful reflections, as she drew near the little mound from which the bright flowers she had planted were fast fading away.

One afternoon, it was toward the close of October, her steps were directed to her accustomed haunt. Two days had past since her last visit, and the heavy rain that had fallen almost continually during the interim, had robbed the grave-yard of the remnants of summer beauty: and as she passed slowly through the damp leaf-strewn paths she trembled with grief and nervousness, when her eye rested on the spot so dear to her maternal heart. There, more than anywhere else, she thought, were the ravages of the chilling storm; and she wept more disconsolately than since the first days of bereavement as she bent over the faded mound—her face bowed upon her hands as was usual with her in seasons of great anguish. She continued thus indulging her grief till startled by an approaching footstep, and looking up beheld a gentleman almost at her side. With a wild scream she threw her arms about him sobbing convulsively, "Oh, Gustavus, our Charlie's gone! our own darling, darling little Charlie!"

The gentleman was indeed Gustavus Barton. Vainly had he sought in foreign climes the peaceful happiness he had recklessly shipwrecked, and returning to his native city was told of his son's death. Stunned and heart-stricken he had set out to visit the grave, and wandering through the church-yard had witnessed his wife's anguish, which softened still more his relenting feelings. Tears streamed over the face of the proud man, as tenderly supporting his distressed wife, he knelt with her beside the grave where reposed the remains of him who had been so dear to both the erring parents. He could not speak, and Emily also wept in silence, till at length as the night shadows deepened they rose sadly, and together proceeded to her quiet dwelling; where the only remaining object of parental tenderness was clasped in the fond embrace of a father of

whom her infant mind retained no remembrance. The sight of her recalled more vividly her brother's image, and he exclaimed mournfully, "My bright, beautiful boy; I told him he would never see me again—but oh, I thought not of death!"

In the city where the first years of their married life were spent, Mr. and Mrs. Barton now

reside, less gay, but more really happy than in the time to which both look back with painful self-upbraiding. But the lessons of the stern teacher affliction have not been vain, they have learned mental forbearance, which renders lasting the reconciliation tacitly made at the grave of little Charlie.

ROSA BLAKE AND HER LOVERS.

BY CARRY STANLEY, AUTHOR OF "ADA LESTER'S SEASON IN NEW YORK."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 88.

CHAPTER V.

FARMER BLAKE'S new barn was to be raised. Mrs. Blake was in her glory. It was to be the largest, the most complete barn in the country. The very thought of the future bursting granaries, the overflowing hay-mows, the well-filled stalls, made the good dame try to strike up a tune as she went about her work. Her happiness extended to all around her. Rosa had not once been called stupid nor idle, during the vast preparations which were being made for the supper after the barn was up; and even the schoolmaster partook of her graciousness.

"Give the children a short nooning, Mr. Anderson," she said, as she was preparing his dinner basket with her own hands, "and then you can let school out earlier. You must be sure to come," and she hurried off to the well-stored pantry, and selected a custard pie, which had been baked for the great occasion, but being somewhat burnt she concluded to bestow on the schoolmaster.

Mrs. Blake's early dinner had scarcely been cleared away, when the yard commenced filling with vehicles of all descriptions. From every one emerged one or more honest-hearted, sun-burnt farmers in their shirt sleeves, who gave Mrs. Blake a congratulatory nod if they happened to see her, and then proceeded to join their companions around the new barn. The greatest hilarity and kindness prevailed everywhere. There was a deal of dry humor, a witty saying now and then that put the whole company in an uproar, and much good-natured bantering. A few of the neighboring "women folks" had accompanied their husbands, in order to assist Mrs. Blake. Rosa and her friend Jane Thompson had left their elders in consultation over fricassees, and taken a stand where they could overlook the workmen; and the girls' laughing faces encouraged all who came near them to make a passing remark.

"Never saw such a barn as this, Rosy, in P——, did you? Why, you could tuck one of them jim-crack things in your hay-mow, and room to spare," said an old farmer.

"Come, girls, lend us a hand, don't be idle,"

a more bashful young fellow would remark, looking sheepishly away as he spoke.

"If they would only do as I tell 'em, they'd have it in its place in a twinkling," said Joe Johnson, joining the girls.

"I'm sure of it, you know so much," said Rosa, demurely, "but how would you do it?"

Mr. Johnson attempted to explain, but either Rosa's knowledge of mechanics was not very extensive, or he was not particularly lucid, for she did not see how the work would be advanced one inch by his method.

"There's Mr. Anderson, he seems to be explaining something. I believe he knows everything, almost, and I'll be bound he'll find out a way," said Jane Thompson, whose admiration for the schoolmaster was only surpassed by that which she felt for his brother, a clerk in the largest store in B——.

"Some people's great on talking and palaver-ing, but you never see them put a shoulder to the wheel themselves," said Joe, angrily.

"That's *very* true," said Rosa, looking at Mr. Johnson, who received the implied compliment most deprecatingly.

In a few moments the schoolmaster joined the girls, when Rosa said,

"Mr. Anderson, you don't seem to be of much use here. Suppose you come with us to help fix the tables in the long shed, and carry the chairs and benches."

"Oh, let me help, too. I'd like to," said Joe, taking a step toward the house.

"No, you know they can't get along without you here. Put your shoulder to the wheel, Mr. Johnson," answered Rosa, and her black curls seemed fairly to dance with mischief, as she walked away with Anderson and Jane.

The table in Susan's glowing brick shed, was loaded with all the good things which Mrs. Blake deemed proper for such an occasion. Such pitchers of amber-colored cider and white milk; such dishes of chicken fricasseed in cream; such a ham with a ruffle of white paper around its neck, and spotted all over with thumb marks of black pepper; such custard, and dried apple, and green huckleberry pies; and plates of Boston

cake, and York cake, and jumbles, and real old-fashioned rusk. A shout and a hurrah proclaimed that the barn was up, and all walked backward to take a survey: then at Mr. Blake's invitation they trooped toward the house for supper. How the pump-handle went, to be sure, as each one bent his head down to the nozzle, and laved his face and hands in the pure water, and then drew from his pocket a small comb to smooth the hair with!

The men seated themselves at the table, and Mrs. Blake and Susan presided over the coffee-pots and tea-pots on one side, while the assistant dames, as well as Rosa and Jane Thompson, waited on the guests.

"Well, neighbor Blake, when that barn's finished, it 'll be about the nicest one in this part of the state," said one sturdy farmer, as he poured out his coffee into his saucer, and blew on it to cool it.

"Poety hard work to raise such a thing as that," said another, taking a huge bite off the piece of pie he held in his hand.

"Yes," answered the owner, who was always willing to give "honor to whom honor is due," "and if it had not been for our good friend the schoolmaster, here, it wouldn't have been up by this time, and maybe not at all. It was awful tough work."

"He told us everything just as plain as if it had been in a book," said another.

"I'm afraid my explanation would have been of little use, if there had not been plenty of willing hands to execute," replied Anderson. "It was only a simple rule of mechanics."

"Simple enough," muttered Johnson, as he helped himself to a slice of ham, "it is just what I told 'em."

Joe had made frequent visits to the bucket of cider, which had stood in the vicinity of the new barn, that afternoon, emptying tin cup after tin cup of it, and that with what he drank at the supper-table, was beginning to tell upon his demeanor.

Rosa was reaching over the crowded table for a plate of biscuit, which stood opposite to Joe, when he, taking advantage of her being so close to him, and really scarce knowing what he was doing, took the opportunity to squeeze the disengaged hand, which hung by her side. The girl's angry impulse was to box his ears, but as she turned to leave the table, she contented herself by touching Johnson's chair, which was tilted on its two hind legs, with her foot, and depositing him on the ground. The discomfited lover gathered himself up as he best could, and after casting a mortified glance on Rosa, who

had not appeared to notice the mishap, he concluded that it was all an accident.

CHAPTER VI.

THE early supper had been cleared away, and by dark everything in Mr. Blake's quiet household had resumed its ordinary appearance. Rosa went out on the piazza where her father and Anderson were talking over the new barn, and the chance of its being roofed in and completed before the coming harvest. The excitement of the day had died away, and a reaction taken place in Rosa's feelings, so with a sigh she seated herself on a step by her father, and leaned her head on his shoulder. The loving old man patted her cheek, and kissed her, and called her a baby, and then arose and went into the house.

"Well, Miss Rosa," said Anderson, "how do you feel after the bustle and fatigues of the day?"

"I don't know," said Rosa, laughingly, "but I believe I've got the blues."

"You are feeling some contrition, perhaps, for Mr. Johnson's fall," was the answer, as a whiff of smoke from a cigar curled up in the moonlight.

In spite of the serious tone in which this was said, Rosa laughed gleefully.

"Why should I feel contrition, I'd like to know," asked the girl.

"Because you caused the fall, Miss Rosa, and as he was your father's guest, it was neither polite nor kind," was the grave answer.

"He squeezed my hand," burst out Rosa, through her tears.

"But do you not know that there was nothing you could have done which would mortify Mr. Johnson so much. Why not tell him on the first opportunity that you would not allow any such liberties, if you did not like them."

"Like them!" said Rosa, indignantly, "I felt like boxing his ears."

A smile played around the lips of the school-teacher, at the petulant answer. He took two or three puffs of his cigar, then he said,

"I have no right, I know, to talk so to you, but I cannot help seeing and regretting these little things which are growing on you, and marring your character."

"What a good preacher you would make," answered the girl, with a forced laugh.

"I hope so," was the grave reply, "as I want to be one, some of these days."

"Be a minister in earnest?" queried Rosa, raising her head from the post against which she was leaning: and the awe which she had at first

felt for Anderson, and which had gradually disappeared, all returned again.

"Yes, but it may be many years yet, for it will take a long while for me to save enough money to enable me to complete my studies. I have not said much about it, for it all seems so far in the distance. What do you think of it, Rosa?"

A smile played over the girl's face, for it was the first time the schoolmaster had ever dropped the "Miss," when addressing her. She wondered whether Anderson would mind if she asked her father to lend him the money, but she felt that she dared not do it without his approval; and then the smile died away, and she sighed again, as she sat with her linked hands, clasping her knees, gazing out on the moonlight; and she thought how superior he was to anybody she knew, and what a foolish, unfeeling girl he must think her; and ended it all with another sigh, and wondering who would be his wife.

As for Anderson, he sat within the shadow of the prairie rose, which was trailed along the side of the porch, and watched the changes in his companion's face, as she leaned against the pillar in the full moonlight, and asked himself how many weary years he would have to labor before he would be in a situation to ask sweet Rosa Blake to be his wife, and if before then, her hand might not be given to another.

"Come, Rosa, you have not told me what you think about my being a minister," said he, after a long silence.

"I don't know. I suppose it's best for you," answered Rosa, with a sigh, and she got up and went into the house, with a feeling of humiliation, and a heavy weight about her heart.

CHAPTER VII.

For many days gay Rosa Blake seemed quite subdued. The corners of her sweet mouth drooped, her bright eyes had a thoughtful look in them most unusual, and she went about her household duties with a gravity which none had ever seen before. Even the obnoxious Joe Johnson was kindly, if not cordially received, and poor Rosa began to hope that she was going to be more like what Mark Anderson would wish.

But it was impossible for this state to last with a temperament like hers. She could no more help being gay, and laughing and mischievous, than the sweet summer flowers could help blooming. As her old manner gradually returned, its brightness would be shadowed now and then by the recollection that Mark Anderson

was going to be a minister, and that he thought her a trifling, unfeeling girl.

And so Anderson taught his school, and Rosa hunted eggs, and churned, and laughed away, a perfect sunbeam in the house; and Joe Johnson's visits became more frequent. He was entirely assured that his acres had subdued Rosa, whose more kindly manner to him had given him vast encouragement.

But Mrs. Blake was not satisfied. She did not approve of her daughter's deference to the schoolmaster's opinions, nor her listening so quietly when he read, nor the long walks in the woods with him, nor the twilight *tele-a-tetes*; and as she sometimes averred, she sincerely wished him in "Scramskatska, or some of them outlandish places he reads about," instead of in her house.

"Thanks to goodness, he'll soon be gone," she said to her husband one day.

But Mr. Blake was unsympathizing, and only replied,

"Well, mother, I'm rather sorry. He's a clever young man, I think, and I shall miss him a good deal, what with his reading the papers to me, and playing chequers of an evening."

"So will Rosa, I expect; he's always a fooling about her, and making her believe she's so smart, and that nobody's good enough for her that hasn't got book learning. To think that he's expecting to get *her*, and him as poor as a church mouse," and Mrs. Blake tore off an extra sized patch as she spoke.

The subject of the schoolmaster was all at once presented in a new aspect to Mr. Blake, who was quite silent for some minutes. At last he said,

"Well, it isn't quite what I looked for, that's a fact; he don't know nothing at all about farming."

"I don't believe he knows a potatoe from a turnip till it's cooked," answered the wife, as she jerked her thread through her work. "Now there's Joe Johnson, that would give all he's worth for Rosa, as anybody can see with half an eye; but she treats him no better than a beggar. Such a splendid farm as that is, and joins ours, too," continued the good lady in an aggrieved tone.

"Maybe I could get that piece of meadow land, if they struck up a bargain," said Mr. Blake, after a pause, to whom all the advantages of the match had just then made themselves apparent; for he it known, that the aforesaid piece of meadow land, which belonged to old Mr. Johnson, and who, when he found Mr. Blake was really anxious to have it, was just as determined that

he would not sell, was a kind of Mordecai at the gate of good Mr. Blake's happiness. So that piece of meadow land was thrown in the scale against Mr. Anderson's chequers and newspapers.

"Where is Rosa, now?" asked the father.

"Gone a blackberrying—and to meet Mark Anderson, I suppose," replied Mrs. Blake.

Now at this very moment, and when Rosa's destiny was being decided by a piece of meadow land, she was singing away by the road side, filling her basket with delicious berries, and thinking how much Mr. Anderson would enjoy them for tea.

"Pleasant day, Miss Rosa," said a voice behind her suddenly, as she was thus engaged. It was the voice of Joe Johnson. The song died on the girl's lips, and with a short recognition, she went on picking the berries.

Joe stood awkwardly enough for a few moments, then asked her to let him help her.

"No, thank you, it is not worth while. I have nearly enough," replied Rosa.

"I saw you here as I came across from the hay field," he said, "and I thought you looked lonely-like, so, as I'm in no hurry, I'll just wait and see you home."

"Well, as you are so kind," replied Rosa, "suppose you gather those fine berries that I saw over the fence; it will save me climbing away up there, and they are too nice to leave," and she pointed out the spot to Joe. Mr. Johnson obeyed with alacrity, and kept up a random conversation with Rosa, who stood some distance below him on the road side.

"There are some great big ones here, just by this cedar bush," at last exclaimed Mr. Johnson, "but let me empty these into your basket first."

Rosa held up her basket, received the fruit, and thanking him with a pleased smile, bade the enamored lover, in an unusually gracious voice, to get the largest he could.

The fence was on quite a high bank, so that conversation could not be carried on very easily, but Joe picked indefatigably for a little while, when he called out from behind the cedar bush, "Oh, Miss Rosa, I've got the basket lid most half full a'ready."

But no answer came to this piece of information, and he repeated it, yet with no better success. At last he arose and peered around the bush, and down where he had left Rosa, but she was not there. Then he looked across the fields, then up, then down the road, and at last he saw her walking leisurely along and talking to Mark Anderson.

For a few moments indignation kept Joe motionless, then exclaiming, "Darn his eyes," he took the basket lid which he held in his hand, filled with luscious, dewy berries, and poising it for an instant, he sent it skimming down the road, in the direction of his fair tormentor. If the lid was meant to reach Rosa, it never arrived at its destination; and she, unconscious of, or uncaring for the angry storm which she had raised, chatted on gaily of the flowers which she had found, and which, with true artistic taste, she had sprinkled over the berries she was showing to the schoolmaster.

Just then she looked up and saw Joe with his hands by his side, exactly as they had fallen after he had dismissed the basket lid; and when upon seeing her he turned away, and posted across the peach orchard in an opposite direction, she broke into one of her gay laughs.

"What is the matter, Rosa?" asked Anderson, whose eyes followed the direction of her own, but seeing nothing.

"Oh, it's such a good joke," was the laughing reply, "I left him in the lurch that time," and her eyes sparkled with fun.

It was with difficulty that the schoolmaster restrained a sympathetic smile.

"I suppose you mean Mr. Johnson," said Anderson.

"Yes, to be sure I do; he is *such* a stick. A body can't stir without his popping up like a ghost beside them," replied Rosa, with vivacity, and she detailed her afternoon's exploit.

Anderson was more amused than he would have liked to confess to Rosa, but he would not applaud, and he was afraid his voice would betray him if he attempted to condemn her conduct, so he said nothing, but a grave look settled on his face.

Rosa waited for a moment, then finding her companion made no remark, she cast a quick glance at him, but gathered no encouragement from the expression of his countenance.

"Of course you think it was all wrong, Mr. Anderson," she said at last, with a pout on her red lip, and some little bravado in her manner.

"Your own kind heart, Rosa, must decide that. You can imagine whether Mr. Johnson is wounded or mortified by your conduct."

There was no reply made, but the two finished their walk in silence. At tea time, the berries peeped up most temptingly through their coating of fine white sugar, but Rosa could not eat of them. She sat balancing her spoon on the edge of her cup, almost ready to cry, as she thought how silly and heartless her conduct must appear to Anderson.

"DEAR me," exclaimed Mrs. Blake, suddenly, as she saw farmer Thompson's heavy wagon go past, "that just puts me in mind that I promised Mrs. Thompson a setting of our Muscovy duck's eggs. I was to have sent them over yesterday, but I forgot all about it."

"Let me take them, mother," said Rosa, quickly, "I can easily get back before dark."

Mrs. Blake gave a willing consent, arranged the eggs neatly between layers of tow, and handed the basket to Rosa.

"If you will wait a minute, Rosa, I will go over with you. I want to see Mr. Thompson on school business," said Mark, as he helped himself to another spoonful of berries.

With a pleased blush, to think that Anderson did not believe her so very bad after all, Rosa said that "she would walk slowly on, and he might join her if he choose," her pride forbidding her doing such an undignified thing as waiting for him.

Mrs. Blake was in dismay, for it seemed to her that she had thrust Rosa into the lion's mouth, when one reason that she had approved of her daughter's going was, that for one evening at least, the conversation on the piazza would be stopped. She looked over the clear sunset sky in vain for some clouds, as a pretext for calling Rosa back; but none could be found; and before any other reason presented itself the girl was out of the gate, and Anderson reaching down his hat to join her.

The full June moon was looking down through the intertwining boughs and quivering leaves of the trees, and making a moving network of moonlight on the greensward beneath them, as Mark and Rosa proceeded slowly homeward. With eyes dewy with tears, the young girl was gazing over the sleeping landscape bathed in a soft light; feeling that irresistible longing which so often creeps over one at the sound of some music, as if it was the heart's cry for the unattainable; a vain, wild wish that the holy quiet of the night might enter into her soul and purify her. A low sigh aroused her companion from his reverie, as he walked by her side, with his hands clasped behind him and his head bowed down, unheeding of the beautiful, sad smile on the face of the earth, which had so affected Rosa.

"We are almost home, and I have so much to say to you; will you turn and walk back with me for a little while, Rosa?" asked Anderson, and he took the girl's hand and placed it on his arm.

"I have been wanting, dear Rosa, to tell you how much I love you," said he, as he imprisoned

the hand which clung to his arm in his own, "but I saw such a weary waiting for you, if you consented to be my wife, that I have sometimes felt as if it would be cruel to you to ask your love."

Rosa cast a frightened glance at her companion, and drawing her hand suddenly from his arm, she asked, as if scarcely believing what she heard,

"Do you really mean me? Oh! I can't believe it, Mr. Anderson, I'm so unworthy of you," and she stopped for a moment, and gazed with a kind of bewildered expression into the schoolmaster's face.

A grave smile stole around Mark's lips as he replaced the hand on his arm, and answered,

"Indeed I do mean you, little Rosa. I fear I love you more dearly for your faults, though I know you will try to correct them, because they are wrong. But do you know, darling, that it may be years before I can have a home for you, and call you my wife? It is cruel to ask such a sacrifice of you, dear Rosa. I see now how wrong it was."

The holy beauty of the night appeared to have melted into her face; and the girlish heart, lately so wayward and unquiet, seemed suddenly to have grown calm and strong with her woman's destiny, as she answered frankly,

"I love you, Mark; I will wait."

There was an eager pressure of her hand, a kiss almost of reverence on her brow, then a long, happy silence.

"It will be asking a great deal of your parents, Rosa, to give you to so poor a man as I am. It does seem presumptuous," at last said Anderson.

"But they love me so much," said the girl, "I am sure mother will consent, if she sees it is for my happiness. As to dear father, I do not believe he will object at all, he does not care for money."

"Shall I speak to your father about it, dear Rosa? Or would you rather tell your mother first?"

"No, no, you speak to father first, Mark. I am afraid I am a little bit of a coward; but perhaps my mother may be disappointed at first, that I did not fancy Mr. Johnson. It is growing late, and she may be worried; had we not better go home, Mark?" Her lips seemed to linger over the last word, as if the right to call him by that name was too much joy.

"Good night, dear Rosa," said Anderson, as he imprinted a kiss on her cheek in the shadow of the prairie rose, "I will try to speak to your father to-night. May good angels watch you."

With a sudden impulse the girl turned around,

took his head between her two hands, gazed a moment into his eyes, and pressing a kiss on his forehead, darted off as if ashamed of what she had done.

She went into the kitchen to deliver Mrs. Thompson's message to her mother. Mrs. Blake was "setting rising," and in no very good-humor when her daughter entered.

"A pretty time of night, to be sure, to be phalandering about the country with a young man," commenced her mother.

"We staid a long while talking with Jane and Mr. Thompson," replied the daughter, evasively. Yet her conscience smote her, for she felt that she was not dealing frankly with her mother.

Mrs. Blake stirred in her yeast with no diminution of ill-temper.

"Once for all, Rosa Blake, I tell you that it ain't modest, and I won't have it. You'll be the talk of the whole country round," said the mother.

Rosa stood with her hands on one end of the dough-trough, watching her mother's face with a mournful look in her sweet eyes, and then she said, "Don't scold me to-night, please, dear mother," so sadly that Mrs. Blake suppressed what further she was going to say.

"Is there anything I can help you do, mother?" asked the daughter, at last, glancing around the neat kitchen.

"It's a pretty time to ask that, after all the work's done," grumbled Mrs. Blake.

Rosa lighted her candle and went to her room. She saw the heavy cloud gathering, which, in her first happiness had seemed "no bigger than a man's hand," and as she knelt by her bed, the voiceless prayer that scarcely arrayed itself in words, was, that in no way might she fail in her duty. She at last arose from her kneeling position, put out her light and sat down by the window. On the piazza below she heard her father and Mark conversing in low voices. In vain she listened, that she might catch from the tone of either, something favorable to her hopes, and she leaned over her window-sill, gazing out on the dewy night that was bearing the perfume of June roses, and honeysuckles, and wall flowers, up to her chamber. At last the voices on the piazza ceased. She heard the hall door closed and locked, Anderson's step pass her room, and then Mr. Blake's slow, heavy tread up the staircase. She half rose from her seat, hoping that her father would come to her door to say a few encouraging words to her; but when she heard his own chamber door open, she sank back again with a sigh of disappointment. But over all this floated the thought, like a rose-colored cloud at

sunset, "he loves me, he loves me." That sentence was the refrain of everything. And she buried her face in her pillow, as if to hide from the cold, pure moonlight the blushes of joy that were mantling her cheek, and the smile that parted her lips as she closed her eyes in sleep, murmuring, "he loves me, he loves me."

Mr. Blake entered his room with a sigh. He took his key from his pocket, and proceeded slowly to wind up his huge silver watch. With unusual deliberation he hung it on the nail by the looking-glass, and as he gave the last twist to the black string, he said,

"Well, mother, the business is done."

"What business?" asked Mrs. Blake, who was laying comfortably in bed, watching her husband's movements.

"What business?" she resumed, finding he did not speak. "You don't mean to say, Sammy Blake, that you are going to let a man that's no better than a beggar, marry your daughter?" and in her energy Mrs. Blake rose on her elbow, gave her soft pillow an energetic shake, and then plumped down into it again.

"No," answered the husband, slowly, as he leaned his elbows on his knees, and dangled by the string, the shoe which he had just taken off, "no, but I s'most wish I had. He's a real fine fellow, I tell you, and I'm afraid that she's desperate fond of him, mother."

"She knows just as much about love as a sucking calf," answered Mrs. Blake, as she flounced over on the other side. "If the thing is put a stop to at once, it'll make no difference in a little while. She hasn't known him no time, and she'll soon get over it."

Mr. Blake shook his head, saying, "I don't know." Then he added, "and it would be a very respectable match in the end for her, for Anderson tells me he's going to turn minister."

"That's all smoke to blind you," was the answer; "and you would have them to support, I suppose. A pretty match it would be, to be sure, to come creeping into her father's house with her husband, instead of having a fine home of her own, like Joe Johnson could give her. I hope you may get the meadow land, that's all," and with this settler, Mrs. Blake turned her back to her husband in sullen silence.

But as farmer Blake made no reply, she soon spoke again.

"What did you tell the man? Can't you let a body know?" she asked, at length, turning her head partially round, and hitching the sheet up with her shoulder.

"I didn't give him any encouragement at all; and you had better speak to Rosa about it in the

morning," answered the father, for the good man shrunk from seeing the pain which he must inflict. He had almost convinced himself an hour before, that his daughter had not known Anderson long enough to grieve about him a great while; but now somehow he began to doubt it.

CHAPTER IX.

THE twittering of the birds in the maple boughs by her window, roused Rosa just as the grey, solemn dawn was creeping over the horizon. She sprang from her bed and went to the window. Everything was awaking to life. From farm-house to farm-house the shrill-voiced cock sent out salutations. The domineering old turkey, with head erect, flashing eyes, ruffled wings, and slow, stately strut, marched around his bewildered hen, in a most Blue-beard fashion, as she in vain endeavored to keep her little hungry flock together; a cow or two in the barn-yard had risen from their recumbent position, and were poking their noses among the dry corn-stalks; the dogs walked about for a little, put their heads down on their paws on the ground, stretched themselves, gaped, and then quietly curled themselves up again; toads went hopping over the gravel walks in search of their morning meal of flies; puss, with a stealthy tread and steady eye, was walking around the arbor-vitæ tree, watching the wren, as it hopped about, perking its little head first on one side, then on the other, with a saucy look in its bright eyes, as if it defied its sleek enemy; the twittering of the birds changed into full, glad songs, till one would think their little throats would burst with rivalry; and heralded by rosy clouds, the sun came up the eastern horizon. Then it seemed as if the whole earth was jubilant with life. It was like the exultant chorus in a solemn oratorio.

The girl's spirits rose higher as she gazed. All her hopes appeared feasible now. With the cold, unsympathizing moonlight, her fears had abated; and rejoicing as everything else did in the glory of the summer morning, she hurried to escape out into the fresh air.

The farm-house below was in vigorous life. The pump-handle boomed continually, ending now and then with a queak and a groan; the farm-servants went whistling away toward the barn with their hands in their pockets; and troops of little chickens were crying "peep, peep," and picking up crumbs around the kitchen-door. As Rosa passed through the back shed, she reached down the basin of golden Indian meal, and moistening it with some water, called

the little flock after her, scattering the food as she went.

In a short time Mrs. Blake approached her, ostensibly for a milk-strainer which hung on a lilac-bush near, but really that she might impart to her daughter her views with regard to Anderson.

Rosa looked up with a sly, blushing glance, but her heart fell as she noticed her mother's face.

"You are waiting here to see Mark Anderson, I suppose," said Mrs. Blake, without circumlocution. "Your father told me all about it last night. I was really astonished at his impudence. He wants your money, that's all, and you may tell him that we won't consent."

All this was delivered in a hasty tone, and with eyes which avoided poor Rosa's beseeching ones; for in spite of her harshness and her ambition, Mrs. Blake sincerely loved her daughter; and she wanted to be over with this unpleasant duty.

"We don't want to be married yet for a good while, mother" pleaded Rosa, "only say you are willing that I should have him at last."

"It's all nonsense; you might wait till doomsday before he'd be rich enough to marry you; a pitiful schoolmaster," answered Mrs. Blake, working herself into a passion.

"He's going to be a minister," said the daughter.

"Minister or schoolmaster, it's all one; he'll never be able to support you," retorted the dame.

The tears came to Rosa's eyes, and her voice quivered, as she said,

"Dear mother, I know you are not in a hurry to part with me; and what difference does it make if we are willing to wait."

"All the difference in the world, if neither your father nor me thinks him a proper husband for you."

"But mother——" commenced Rosa.

"There's no use saying a word more about it," broke in Mrs. Blake, as if afraid that her daughter's tears might soften her heart, "your father told Anderson as much last night," and she turned toward the house.

Breakfast time came, and Rosa did not make her appearance. Mark took his seat at the table as usual; but the good-hearted farmer felt sorry to see that the young man played with his spoon and knife and fork, more than he ate. There was no comment made by any one about Rosa's absence; but as Mr. Blake passed out of the door the schoolmaster joined him, and requested that he would leave his trunk at Mr. Roberts'

as soon as convenient, as he should not return to Mr. Blake's again.

The good farmer grasped the thin hand of Anderson in his own, with many compunctions, and without saying a word in reply, muttered to himself as he walked away, "he's a whole team, I declare."

Mark took his book out on the piazza to read till school-time, as was his custom; but he could not fix his attention upon it; and it dropped by his side in his reverie, from which he was aroused by Rosa's approach. The poor girl's eyes were red and swollen with weeping.

"It is not wrong to speak to you this once, is it, Mark? You know what my father and mother have said; but I wanted to tell you that you must always believe that I love you; though I can never marry you without they are willing," and she sunk on the bench in a flood of tears.

"Dear Rosa," said her lover, bending over her, "I have perfect faith in you, and would not ask you for one moment to disobey your parents; but if we wait patiently and cheerfully, perhaps by-and-bye they will look on our marriage more favorably. Keep up a good heart, darling, and you will be my little wife yet."

But Rosa could only weep; it seemed at that moment as if the burden was too great to bear.

"If they only wouldn't ask me to marry any one else, it would not be so hard; but I know they will," sobbed she.

"We cannot see how, yet, dear Rosa; but I believe that these crooked ways will be made

straight, and if we do our duty, all will come right at the end. We know that we love each other, and that must be sufficient at present. I think it wiser to leave here now, Rosa, because we must get accustomed to the separation, and it is best not to exasperate your parents by being together."

They sat a long while in silence, the girl with her head on her lover's shoulder, quieted by his words, till at last he bent down his head, saying,

"There's a long, farewell kiss, dear Rosa; I must go now; but be patient and cheerful."

"Farewell, Mark, I shall always love you," she said, then flew up stairs to watch him, as far down the road as she could see him from her chamber window.

Rosa did not leave her room till dinner time, and then the slight degree of composure which she had attained was destroyed by her father's unusually affectionate manner. He was constantly offering her the choicest pieces on the table, or piling her plate with things with which she choked in attempting to eat; and at last she was obliged to rise and leave in order to hide her tears.

The good man looked distressed, and shook his head; but Mrs. Blake said, "he made the girl worse than she would be, by noticing her."

Anderson's trunk was removed that afternoon, and Rosa went into the now vacant room, swept and dusted it herself, and then arranged everything as nearly as possible as it was when he occupied it.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

AMY NORTON'S VALENTINE.

BY FANNIE SMITH.

AMY NORTON leaned her head wearily against the back of her rocking-chair, the tears rolling down her cheeks without her knowing it, as she sat with her hands folded listlessly in her lap, looking out of her window high up in the third story of her uncle's house.

It was St. Valentine's day, and she could see on the opposite side of the street the postmen and dispatch-men running about as if crazy, delivering mysterious-looking missives at the neighboring houses. At the dinner-table she had seen her cousin Charlotte and Lizzie Rogers' Valentines displayed and counted on with pride; had heard them wonder who this and the other pretty trifles was from; and what their brother Dick, the handsome young lieutenant, would send to the rich heiress, Emma Walton.

Amy's lips quivered as she bent over her plate, and felt that in all this laughter and gaiety she was supposed to have no part. A long sickness had weakened her mentally and physically, and this was the first day she had made sufficient exertion to get down stairs.

No, she had no part in it, except as far as the two younger children were concerned. Their gentle cousin Amy was their prime confidant. Mamma was too nervous, and Lotte and Lizzie were always too much engaged to attend to their childish wants, so to Amy they carried all their troubles and pleasures. And that morning, after she had heard Charley his French lesson, and tried to attend to little Flora's music, she had copied verses into various pretty wreaths of painted flowers on satin paper, and directed innumerable Cupids with their torches and arrows and bleeding hearts, to the young masters and misses with whom the children considered themselves to be irrecoverably in love. Charley at ten thought young ladies in pantalettes scarcely out of the nurse's arms, and little Miss Flora at eight said she *did* wish she knew a boy that wore a coat.

All this unusual exertion and sad thoughts had worn the convalescent out, and when her tardy cousin Dick had taken his place opposite to her at the dinner-table, and said in his cordial manner,

"By the stars and stripes, little girl, I'm glad to see you afloat again," she could have cried outright at his kind words.

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But her dashing cousins thought her too insignificant a personage to engage for even a few moments the attention of their gay, handsome brother, so they commenced with,

"Now, Dick, do tell us what you sent Emma Walton."

"That's a secret, ladies," answered the brother, drawing down the corners of his mouth.

"Oh, but we won't tell, and we know how to keep a secret," said the two sisters together.

"Well, as you both look like the Sphinx, particularly Lizzie, who has such thick lips, perhaps you may be trusted, and I'll tell you just this much——"

But the girls had to wait, while he took a piece of turkey, then a mouthful of potato, and a sip of sherry, for the young lieutenant liked what he called "good rations," before he went on.

Each sister sat and eyed him anxiously, and Lotte thought it was vulgar to eat so much, and had they not stopped him, another piece of turkey would have followed the sherry.

"Well?" they questioned together.

"Well," said Dick, "I haven't got it ready yet. It's a matter of importance, I assure you, girls. It will require a great deal of thought, for I've made up my mind to offer myself to the lady to whom I send the Valentine."

"Oh, you dear, good brother," said Lizzie.

"Won't it be nice to have Emma Walton for a sister," added Lotte.

"Don't be too fast, girls, maybe she won't have me."

"Pshaw, Dick!" again chimed the sisters, as if for any one that was free refusing their handsome brother was impossible.

The lieutenant finished his dinner with a relish, then drawing his napkin across his mouth, he asked,

"Well, cousin Amy, how many Cupids for you to-day. Any Valentines, eh?"

"No," was the languid reply, without raising her eyes.

"That's bad," and he stroked his moustachios. "If I hadn't vowed I'd send but one, you should have one yet."

Amy took a mouthful of water, and then seemed to be looking for a Valentine in her glass. She left the table as the dessert was being

placed on, pleading fatigue, and as Dick rose to open the door for her, she did not stop to thank him, but rushed up stairs into her own room.

"So you are tired, girls, of having me at home, are you? I wouldn't have believed it," said the lieutenant, peeling an almond.

"No, but it would be so nice to have a wedding, and a sister-in-law, and all that," said Lizzie.

"And for you to marry and settle down, and not go to sea any more, now that aunt Bradford has left you so much money," added Charlotte.

"You know it has been *my* wish a long while, Richard," said Mrs. Rogers, in a desponding tone. She always spoke as if her children's high spirits were too much for her.

"Well, I'll sacrifice myself for the good of the family, and take your advice. Blame yourselves if I make you wretched, ladies," and Dick fished out an almond from the bottom of his wine-glass as he spoke.

So Amy sat at her window, and felt as if no one cared for her. And she thought over her happy childish days, and how her father and mother had idolized her; and of their beautiful country home; and how her cousin Richard spent all his vacations there; and of the pony he taught her to ride; and of himself and Towser pulling her out of the pond, when she went to gather water lilies; and how he teased her to kiss him and called her his little wife; she thought of all this, and if smiles came up at the memory, they were quickly quenched by tears for the sorrows which followed. Then came recollections of her mother's shrouded form, and and the darkened house, and the hushed footsteps of the servants; then of her father's broken fortune and failing health and last blessing; and of the earth which fell with a hollow sound on the coffin-lid, and of the brown grave beside her mother's green one. Then of the blank which her life had seemed to be since then. And how she had been received into her aunt's family, not unkindly, it is true, but with indifference; how she had sunk almost into the condition of an inferior, helping the children with their lessons, teaching Flora music, amusing her aunt; dressing her cousin's hair; and taking charge of the patch-basket on every Wednesday.

Poor Amy! poor child! She felt as if there was not a ray of sunshine on the broad earth, and she leaned her head on her arm against the window-sill, and sobbed out, "Oh, if I had only died! if I had only died!"

She forgot the anxious eyes which had watched her during her illness; the parties and engagements that the girls had given up, in order to attend to her; the efforts that her weak aunt had

made to have her comfortable; the oranges that Charley had bought with his own pocket money for her fevered palate; the careful hands of little Flora, that darkened her room to the exact tone, which she liked; the books, the tempting clusters of white grapes, or the flowers, which Richard sent to her room every day; she forgot all these in her present feeling of desolation.

No, not all; for the recollection of Richard's gifts stood pre-eminently out, only making her sorrow the more bitter.

She looked up, saw on her dressing-table, a wine-glass which contained a white rose nearly withered—the last of a beautiful bouquet that her cousin had sent her; with a passionate impulse she snatched it from the water, threw it on the floor and crushed it with her foot; then she leaned her head down again and sobbed like a little child.

So the dreary afternoon wore away, and her chamber darkened, and the lights in the street were being lighted.

By-and-bye little Flora came tripping up stairs, humming in her thin, childish voice,

"Oh, what's the use of sighing,
When time is on the wing,"

but she stopped as she opened the door, calling out, "Amy, Amy, where are you?"

"What is it, Flora?" asked her cousin.

"Oh, are you there? It was so dark I couldn't see you. What makes you set without a light, Amy? I think it is horrible. Mamma wanted to know if you wouldn't please dress me for the cotillion party? Eliza has gone out."

Amy arose, lighted the gas, and commenced getting the child's things from the bureau-drawers.

The little girl pirouetted around the room humming a waltz, whilst her cousin was thus employed, but suddenly stopped as she exclaimed,

"Oh, Amy, what do you think? Our Dick is going to marry Miss Emma Walton. I don't like her, she's so proud—I wish he'd marry you, instead; but won't we have lots of fun for all? I mean to sit up as long as anybody stays, and dance every set, the night the girls give her a party."

"What dress are you to wear to-night, Flora?" interrupted Amy.

"My white muslin and new pink sash," replied the child. "I mean to coax mamma to get me a dear little white silk for the wedding. What will you wear, Amy?"

But without waiting for a reply, the happy little creature rattled on,

"I'm engaged for every waltz to-night already."

Tom Rawlson says he thinks this white frock so pretty. I expect he'll ask me to dance some plain quadrilles with him, but quadrilles are such flat things after waltzing. Gus Walton will be mad, I guess, for I haven't kept one waltz for him, he's such a disagreeable fellow. What do you think he said, Amy? why that, that stuck up sister Emma of his called you a 'sister of charity.' I do wish our Dick would marry somebody else."

The toilet by this time was completed, and the embryo belle giving a glance of satisfaction at the mirror, picked up her handkerchief and little slippers and departed.

Amy turned down the gas light, and took up her seat again at the window. The tea-bell sounded, but she did not stir, she could not meet the family with her troubled face and swollen eyes. Presently the servant knocked at the door.

"Missus Rogers send up word be sure drink de hot tea and eat de oshters, cause dey's particular nice, Miss," said James.

Amy took the tray and sat it on the table, and seated herself in her old position without tasting the food.

In a little while Flora came up stairs to tell her if she got tired to go to bed, and that she would creep in behind her as softly as a mouse, when she came home; then she heard Charley's voice calling through the house for his mislaid cap and comforter; then the carriage drive up to take the girls to a large party; then her aunt's chamber door close behind the nervous invalid and her bowl of chamomile tea and camphor bottle; and she felt more lonely and desolate than ever.

Another knock at her door aroused her.

"Here's a Valentine for you, Miss," said James, with a broad grin, as he handed it in.

Who could send her a Valentine? It must be a mistake, she thought, as she carried it to the light. It was folded like a letter, the direction was plain enough, and she opened and read:—

"DEAR LITTLE AMY—I love you very much; I believe I have loved you ever since I saved you from an Ophelia-like death, in the pond, and called you my little wife. I hope, sweet cousin, that I'm not out of my reckoning if I have sometimes thought it returned. Forgive me if you do love me, if I pained you by what I said to-day at the table, but I was selfish enough to wish to know my exact position, and to enjoy putting the girls on the wrong track.

"I'm a worthless fellow, I know, dear Amy, but if you will only be my little wife, by God's help I will try to make you a good husband.

"If your Valentine, dearest, is deficient in the

usual polished sentences, believe me that your sailor cousin's heart is none the less warm.

RICHARD."

Amy wept harder after reading this than she had done all the afternoon, but such joyful tears. Then she stooped down and picked up the crushed white rose and kissed it; and then she read the letter again.

"Mister Richard wants to know if Miss Amy won't please be so kind as to step down to de parlor. All de family's out, and he's lonely-like," said James, again at her door.

Amy bathed her eyes and arranged her disordered dress, and with half eager, half reluctant steps she descended to the parlor door. She could not find courage to enter, and as she heard her cousin walking up and down the room, whistling thoughtfully, she determined to go up stairs again and write her answer. But just then the parlor door, by which she was standing, opened, and Dick came out for the purpose of hurrying her down.

"Afraid to come in, little one?" he asked, as he drew her into the parlor. "I hope that's not an unfavorable sign for me, Amy?"

But Amy only shook her head in the negative, and cast down her eyes.

"Then you do love me? God bless you, cousin Amy," and he drew her slender, shrinking form toward him.

He sat stroking her soft blonde hair, in happy silence, her tears flowing afresh. He pressed her to his side, whispering,

"Hush, little one, don't cry, you'll be ill again."

"It's very foolish, I know, but I'm so happy now, and I've been so miserable, Richard. But didn't you love Emma Walton one bit? And what will aunt and the girls say?" asked Amy, in affright, for till that moment she forgot there was any one in the world but Dick Rogers.

"I don't love Emma Walton one bit, Amy, and as to the *bonne mere* and the girls, I'll make it all right with them. Are you satisfied now, Mother Carey's chicken?" he asked, with a gay smile.

It required but little more eloquence to satisfy his cousin, and the two sat there till they heard the children come in from the cotillion party, and pass what they supposed to be the deserted drawing-room; and feeble as Amy's illness had made her, she bore the fatigue of sitting up wonderfully well, till she heard the carriage drive up, about one o'clock, and the girls return from the party. She hurried from the room, scarcely waiting for her lover's good night kiss, and in her flight dropped Richard's letter.

"Why Dick, what's the matter? Why weren't

you at Mrs. Davis' to-night with Emma Walton? You didn't send the Valentine, did you?" asked the sisters.

"One woman, and one question at a time, is as much as any reasonable man can be expected to attend to," said the brother, throwing himself on the sofa.

"What's this?" asked Charlotte, as she picked up the letter which Amy had dropped in her hurry.

"Amy's Valentine," replied Richard, stroking his moustache, with a demure smile.

"Why, it's just like a letter," said Lizzie, putting out her hand to take it.

"Who is it from? let us read it," said the two.

Dick watched the girls, still stroking his moustache.

"Richard *who?* not you?" asked Lotte.

"You are only joking! Emma Walton!" added the bewildered Lizzie.

"What a storm, I must escape," said Dick.

"Don't go, don't go. How could you be so foolish? You are not serious. Tell us all about it," chorussed both the girls.

So Richard drew a sister on each side of him,

and told them how long he had loved their cousin; and how unhappy such a wife as Emma Walton would have made him, and ended by asking their sisterly love for poor Amy.

The girls were evidently very much disappointed; but they loved their handsome brother dearly, were good-hearted girls in the main, and really liked Amy, so, though they sighed over Emma Walton's large purse and gay connexions, they promised with a little sigh, to give their cousin no occasion to think she was an unwelcome sister.

As to his mother, Richard knew he would have no trouble, she would be quite satisfied if he was only happy, and she not bothered; so with a gay heart he bid his sisters good night.

It was wonderful how Amy's happiness improved her. Her eye and cheek had a brightness in them that they had not known since childhood; her laugh was as gay as little Flora's; her manner lost its timidity, and assumed so lady-like a self-possession, that the girls became really proud of her; and Richard said that it was all to be attributed to the **VALENTINE**.

DESTINY.

BY SALLIE A. L. HILBURN.

"TALK not to me of destiny. The very word, as you use it, is a fiction, the weak invention of man's sophistry, when seeking to shift the responsibility of his guilt from himself to the Good and All-wise Being, who metes out to each his just reward. Man makes or mars his own fortunes—aye, and woman, too; so, my dear Therese, instead of lamenting your destiny, you had best begin amending it."

"Aunt Annie, you speak thus because you deem it wise and philosophical: but I have been too often hurled from the highest happiness, by some unforeseen calamity, to cherish a hope of shaping my own destiny."

"Therese, my love, your words fill me with sad anticipation; they remind me so forcibly of one whom I loved in other years, one whom you but too closely resemble."

"Of whom do you speak, dear aunt, and why do you sigh?"

"I referred to Isabelle Mortimer, the child of my dearest school-friend; and I sighed to think of the events which marked the history of one who entered life with such bright promise, so joyous and beautiful. If you are not weary of an old woman's reminiscences I will tell you as much of her life as I can remember."

"Do, aunty, that would be so kind. Your moralizing is very acceptable when thrown into the form of a story."

"Just as people swallow sugared pills, I suppose? Well, Therese, I cannot blame you with your impulsive youth for rebelling at the tediousness of age. But to my story.

"The Mortimers were neither poor nor rich: raised above the approach of want, rich enough for comfort but too poor for luxuries, they occupied the happy medium ground where contentment finds its choicest blessings. They were restless and ambitious, consequently felt poor. My friend, Mary Mortimer, despairing of herself and husband ever attaining to that worldly elevation which she coveted, cherished a hope that Isabelle would step into that position on arriving at womanhood.

"I must give some explanation of the then existing divisions of society in our neighborhood, or you will not be able to understand their dis-

content. The party which held the first rank, and considered itself as emphatically the aristocracy, was composed entirely of families possessing great wealth, (some of whom had had it in possession for two or three generations) and with no other claim to distinction. This class of the community, linked together in the closest bond of union, surrounded their homes with every luxury, and turned a repelling front to all the world beside. Neither beauty, wit or intelligence could hope to pass the barrier without the great talisman—gold. Yet Mrs. Mortimer persisted in her plans for Isabelle with that indomitable resolution which is in itself an assurance of success. In view of the great object, every germ of talent in the child's mind was most assiduously cultivated.

"She gave no promise in childhood of her after loveliness, or perhaps that charm, instead of intellect, would have been regarded as the great lever. As it was, poor Bell's brain was kept under a constant pressure, and it being an easy task to win her to study, she made as rapid progress as any hothouse plant.

"You know me too well, Therese, to suppose that I disapprove of the most careful mental culture, but I do think our efforts should be very judiciously made. Isabelle was a very gifted child, and would doubtless have had a perfect passion for study under any circumstances. Unfortunately knowledge was not held up to her as an end in view, but as a secondary consideration, and a means of attaining to a higher social position. Daily and hourly was the subject discussed in her hearing, of their present unfortunate circumstances, until the poor child was led to regard with contempt their many blessings, to feel the chain of poverty where it was not, and to regard life as a worthless boon unless enjoyed in the homes and society of the little great ones of the earth.

"Ere I pass from her childhood, I would mention one of the many means taken by the mother to secure for her child the coveted honor. Her friends (school-friends) were carefully selected from among the children of these much envied people. When visiting Isabelle at her home it was made so agreeable to them as to retain a

pleasant place in their memories, and she learned to count no sacrifice too dear which rendered their partiality permanent.

"These friendships were more lasting than school-girl's attachments are ordinarily, and on leaving school they visited her with the same familiarity as of old. Thus the door was opened. At sixteen Isabelle was ushered into the great world a beautiful enthusiast, and with the prestige of extraordinary talent. Of course her triumph was without a cloud. And now began her own responsibility; now it was in her power to influence her own destiny. She was too highly gifted not to feel the necessity, the worth, and the vast importance of conscientious action in the most trivial thing. Her cheek would glow, and her eye glisten through tears, when drawn out upon the subject of truth; but the first introduction into the world of fashion convinced her that its triumphs were accomplished by pleasing deceptions, and that its exterior was but a web of falsehood. She preferred the triumphs of a belle to the peace of a quiet conscience, and truth was sacrificed.

"Do not look upon Isabelle as a monster, or wonder that I loved her; remember, Therese, that I have dived under the sparkling surface and brought to light the darker shades of her character, passing over the thousand charms which would have made a lovely heroine had my purpose been only to relate a pleasing story. Isabelle was ardent, imaginative, witty, and a poetess; she had the starry eyes, the silvery laugh, and the train of lovers belonging to the stereotyped heroine.

"She loved me as tenderly as you, Therese, and was as confiding in our intercourse. How often she would exclaim, with a sigh, 'Oh that the world were truer, or that society were simple. I cannot be otherwise, I cannot conquer destiny.' It was useless to contend with her; she would repent at the moment with tears and many wise resolves, but to-morrow found her more inextricably entangled in the labyrinths of folly. Our intimacy declined as her popularity extended. I could not refrain from speaking truth, and she cared less to hear it.

"Her mother was happy and triumphant. Isabelle had conquered, Isabelle was a star in that haughty circle, and now it only remained for her to make a suitable match. Mary Mortimer was herself too truthful and high-souled a woman to be willing to see her child a coquette. Her only wish had been to have Isabelle's worth acknowledged by those who had once frowned on herself, and for her to marry some one of high birth worthy of her, and who would estab-

lish her position on a solid foundation. But she had set the stone in motion and could not stay its progress.

"Isabelle, as I previously intimated, preferred the heartless triumphs of a belle. Her artless and confiding manner was a skilful illusion, and completed every conquest began by her beauty and talent. I would watch her then with shame and indignation as she played her treacherous part. To the minister she was an ardent devotee, or half a convert; to the votary of pleasure a worldly butterfly; to the cynic, a caustic wit; to the philosopher, a calm, thoughtful student of nature. I witnessed her conquests, which exceeded in number and difficulty any which I have heard recounted, but in the meanwhile how many true friends she had estranged, how many intimate associates, among young girls, had confided their engagements, but to excite her cupidity and have their lovers swell her list. Still beautiful, still fascinating, her career was arrested, and her triumphs at an end. Miss Mortimer had attained to celebrity, but not such as one might covet; her true character was universally understood; and Isabelle acquired the painful knowledge that the steps which she had taken were calculated to sow her worldly path with thorns, and place her reputation at the mercy of every malicious person whom she had angered. Enemies sprang up around her at every step, the envenomed dart of slander pierced her on every side, and disappointment developed the seeds of early decay. Poor Isabelle! beautiful, gifted and beloved, yet her life had been a failure.

"'Alas! alas! my destiny!' she exclaimed. 'Oh, my child,' answered her mother, 'you have gone too far, you should never have stooped to falsehood.' 'Hear me, Isabelle,' I said, detaining her, as she would have rushed from the room, 'your destiny, as you term it, is not half fulfilled. It is in your power to arrest the current of public opinion, to hush the reproaches of your own conscience, and reinstate yourself in your own and the world's good opinion.'

"'How?'

"'By being true. Be true to yourself, the world and your God. Shun the appearance of deception, shun the sacrifice of conscience to pleasure, act from your own clear knowledge of duty.'

"'Once, once this might have been, but now—to go back—to retrace all my missteps—to bear the world's contumely throughout youth, and wear away my best years in a vain effort to retrieve the past! Oh, I cannot, cannot do it.'

"'You can, indeed, Isabelle. Rouse your

energies, and let conscience speak. You act from the mistaken idea that worldly favor is the most desirable thing, but in seeking that you lose all. Seek then after the favor of God "and all these things shall be added unto you."

"I thank you, my friend," she answered. "I will think of it."

"I hoped she would think of it seriously, but pride and ambition, and the love of splendor were yet too active in her breast. Temptation, new temptation, wooed her again to the path of pleasure, and she rushed boldly on in her career as if no disappointments had ever stayed her. Mr. Clinton, a gentleman of pleasing exterior, high birth, and large fortune, became a suitor for her hand. Seemingly it was a most desirable union: but Isabelle had heard a whisper from the world of his dissipation, and should have trembled to unite her weak and wayward character with his. But here a parent's pride sustained her own inclinations, and Isabelle became the bride of Albert Clinton.

"I saw her sometimes afterward in her princely home, once more a ruling star of the gay world, at others whirling by in her glittering equipage, growing more and more beautiful, but with a strange glitter in her eyes, a contraction of her brow, and a haughty curve of her lips (once ever moulded to a dreamy smile) which told of some bitter, bitter disappointment.

"About a year after the birth of her beautiful boy, I bade her a long adieu, intending to visit the North. When once the journey had been accomplished I felt a reluctance to return. No home ties bound me to my native soil, no duties demanded my return, and I preferred remaining where I found society so congenial. I had, indeed, a very strong tie to detain me, for Mary, my youngest sister, was then at school in Hadley.

"Three years rolled away, during which time the letters written me by Isabelle and her mother were cold and brief, giving no intimation of what was passing in their lives; but at the end of that time I received a long letter, almost a journal, from Isabelle, whose contents summoned me back with speed. It is there in my desk by you, Therese, I have preserved it as a memorial of my poor friend; read it child."

Therese opened the closely-written packet, and read—

"DEAR AUNT ANNIE.—You ask me in your last of my inner life, of the history of those three long years since we parted. Three years! it seems to me a life-time. How shall I begin to tell you all—all the agonising scenes which have traced their history on my brain and heart with a pen

of fire? Oh, kindest, truest friend, would to heaven that I had listened to your warning: but it is past, and my regrets avail me nothing. When I stood a bride at the altar, I loved—truly loved my husband. You know how fascinating his manner, how noble he was in seeming. Oh, through that fascination came the sharpest blow to my poor quivering heart. You know how ambition has been the ruling principle of my life, but you know not, perhaps, how haughty, ungovernable pride, filled my heart. To accomplish my objects I had once stooped to deception, to falsehood; yet in my soul I loved truth, I scorned a lie. It seemed to me baseness could not come nigh my household. How think you then I bore to know the deep blackness and duplicity of my husband's soul? The world had called him wild, dissipated and extravagant; but that was not the beginning. Slowly the truth forced itself upon me. I learned from his own drunken, babbling lips that he was a gambler! a swindler! a liar! That he had wronged the trust of many a lovely maiden! That he was an infidel, fearing not God or man! Oh! my soul grows sick as I recall these things. You, bending over this page, will sigh, and pity me; but my cold pen can never paint to you the agony of that hour. Nay, my words, were you present, could not afford a true picture to you whose life has passed so peacefully. There are some agonies too deep, too burning for language to portray, such is mine. Naught but such love, so awfully betrayed, could realize what I have borne. I first strove by supplication to win him back, he sneered and scoffed at my tears. Then I tried the power of taunts, and poured into his ears my withering scorn; he hurled me from him with an oath, and hastened to his more agreeable companions. All of this, and much more, passed before you left me, but it was necessary for me to go back, to retrace all of the fearful past. I bore my sorrows with Spartan pride, and wore to the world a smiling front, while my soul writhed on the torturing spear. I recalled with shame my own early aberrations from the path of truth, and felt that my punishment was just. Truly had I been reached through my own actions. Methought I repented, methought my faith was now grounded on a rock; but not yet, not yet had all self-sufficiency been uprooted from my breast, and yet more remained to suffer. My baby boy, my blue-eyed Walter, heaven's most precious gift to me, came just in time to save my reason. I was fast going mad between agony and wounded pride, when pitying Providence laid this priceless treasure in my arms, I bent over my boy with the fondness of a mother

for her first-born, and with the gloating eye of a miser, watching his only treasure. He, I thought, as I sang his lullaby, shall redeem our fallen honor. He shall scorn a lie with all my own intensity. Watching this sweet flower unfold its petals, I forgot all the world beside. But alas! a curse hung over my every hope, and my gentle Walter wrung my heart with a sharper pang than ever had his father. He grew a strange child, silent and sad, watching me from the cradle with his great speaking eyes wherever I turned. As he grew older his limbs waxed not in strength, but all day long he would lie upon the door-mat, or out on the grass, watching the stirring world around him with his strange, melancholy look, and ever murmuring a low infant song. I shuddered as I marked his feebleness, for surely some secret disease was preying at his vitals; but my baby-boy was not to fall by disease. One evening I remember well, I sat at my room window watching the stars, and dwelling sadly on my unhappy destiny; when a door opening suddenly up-stairs let loose upon my ears the noise of drunken revelry, songs and shouts, arousing me from my reverie. It was strange that with my usual watchfulness I did not fly to seek for Walter. But I heard my husband's footsteps, as he reeled along the hall, and his words, as he exclaimed, 'I must seek my lady wife to learn how she fares during my neglect,' and this chained me to my seat. He was on the second floor, and I listened expecting to hear him pitch down stairs. He stumbled and exclaimed with an oath, 'what is this?' Kicking the obstacle from his path. A frightful presentiment flashed like lightning through my brain, and I rushed from the room hearing a faint cry followed by a heavy fall. I reached the stairs too late to save him. Catching up his mangled body I hastened to the light.

"I cannot linger even now over that fearful scene. He died. My only treasure passed from earth away, gasping his last breath in these arms. After one wild scream, as I flew to save him, I did not weep or moan. Calmly as if turned to stone I decked him in his grave-clothes, curled the soft golden ringlet round his forehead, and then sat down beside his couch to keep the night-watch. Oh, think of a mother watching beside the couch of her murdered boy! her only one! As I sat there with my great grief slowly crushing the life out of my heart, the door opened softly, and a crouching form stole in. I felt, though I did not turn my eyes, that it was *him*. My heart throbbed violently, the breath in my nostrils grew thickened, a mist floated before my eyes, and a moisture started to my forehead

at his presence. He stood on the other side the corpse, and I bit my lips until the blood came to keep back the gathering curses. After a great while he spoke, extending his hand across the couch—'Isabelle! forgive me, pity me. God is my witness I did it not intentionally.' 'Back, man,' I answered, hoarsely. 'Dare not to touch me or my boy. You have made my heart desolate. Stand there and gloat over your deed, if you will, but mock not my agony.' 'Oh, Isabelle, is mine no agony?' 'Yours!' I shrieked, wildly, 'you, the drunkard, the murderer, do you feel? Ha! ha! Go on. Go down to the grave, feeling thus. Yes, you shall feel. The curse of a bereaved mother shall drive you madly on through time, and all eternity. My vengeance shall never sleep. Night and day I will curse, and will pray God to curse you. Leave me.' I fell back in strong convulsions, and knew nothing more for months. Then I awakened to reason in my father's house, and looking round on the old familiar scene, feeling a great void in my heart, knew that I was desolate. My first act was to obtain a divorce from my husband, and now I have done with him. I vowed to curse him always, but that is past, nay, I can even pity him—alone with his remorse; and as we meet no more this side the tomb, I can look forward to our union above with the hope that our souls shall be so purified from earthly dross as to bear no memories of hatred or revenge. * * * * And now in my haughty isolation from the world, I had a friend, a *sympathizing* friend. Deceived as I had been, the suspicious coldness of experience melted before his deep sympathy of manner, and I gave him my confidence—finally my love. I was wrong, but guiltless. I dreamed a sweet dream of a union with him, and life gliding gently on to the grave soothed by his love. The young heart yearns for support, and it is when choosing for comfort the things of earth, instead of bearing our anguish to the throne above, that we are liable to new deception and sorrow. I was also especially formed for social pleasures, and attached myself to some females whom I counted bosom friends. To these I confided enough of my first sorrow to justify me, and then I told them of my second love. These were sacred trusts, but who is ever faithful? They betrayed me, took my confessions for a foundation, and built them on a fearful structure which went nigh to ruin me. Oh, aunt Annie, how shall I confess to you that scandal has been busy with my name? I was a divorced wife, and however unfortunate such an one may have been, the world ever seeks to fix the stain on her. He, the viper, now threw off his mask, and sneering

at my unutterable wretchedness, revealed the true nature of that love which I had thought so holy. A second time despair overwhelmed me. But on this occasion pride stood my friend, and I cast out the insidious viper from my bosom. * * * * I went for health to a gay watering-place. Here my extreme youth, beauty, melancholy, and unquestionable talents (I speak as of the dead) drew around me an admiring circle, and fearless of evil I yielded to the intoxicating influence of popularity. The dark whispers from home followed me here, friends fell off, my late exuberance of spirits, which had been rejoiced in as an evidence of returning health, was now counted an indication of guilty hardness, and I became desperate in truth. From the gay world I fled to this my last refuge, my childhood's home, and prayed God that I might die. From this depth of misery sprang up my salvation, the light of eternal truth dawned upon my mind, and I became convinced that the hand of Providence had been in all these dark dispensations, drawing me insensibly to him. Had His love, instead of pride, been my support in the first trial, He would not have failed me. Had I gone to Him in my desolation, He would have soothed the weary heart with the balm of heavenly love. Thank heaven, He has conquered the world in my heart, and I have ever been able to review the past with something like calmness while I wrote to you. Before closing this sad history, let me assure you that I do

not throw the blame of my misfortunes on my Creator. I feel that my own hand wrought out this destiny, fearful as it is. And now, my kind friend, I entreat you to come to me. The sun of my life is setting, will you not watch its last lingering rays? ISABELLE CLINTON."

When Therese ceased reading, the good old lady could not speak at first for tears. After a little space she resumed,

"When I received this letter, I had just laid my gentle Mary in her grave, and had no need to linger in the northern clime. I reached her home in time to close the eyes of my poor Isabelle. She sank sweetly to sleep as a child cradled in its mother's arms, her hand resting in that of her repentant husband, and a smile of forgiveness illumining her dying features. Thus passed away the cherished idol of that home, on whose beauty and whose talents, those desolate hearts had built such high hopes of worldly aggrandizement. Think you, my child, that her career would have been thus marked by unusual misfortune had her aim been duty, her worship truth?"

"No, dearest aunt. Your moral is here too pointed to be denied. The wretched husband is, I suppose, that gloomy Mr. Clinton, who clouds every festive scene with his face of woe."

"You are right, and I hope will gather another lesson from this—to pity the misanthrope who your first impulse would condemn."

AN OLD MAID'S SOLILOQUY.

BY SALLY SLICER.

I BELIEVE half the people of Centreville are trying to find out how old I am. As if that was anybody's business but mine. It was very rude in Mrs. Green, yesterday, to come in to see me without knocking at the door. "Taking a neighbor's privilege," indeed! Then 'twas so provoking, too, that she should find me sewing with my spectacles on. I declare her words are ringing in my ears yet. "I want to know if you are obliged to wear spectacles, Sally. Do tell if your eyesight is failing. Why you must be most as old as I am." She looked as if she didn't believe me when I told her that my eyes were weak. Some people have so much curiosity.

And as if that wasn't enough, in comes that saucy Kate Parsons, this morning, to show me her birth-day presents. There was a roguish twinkle in her eye when she said, "I was sixteen yesterday, Miss Slicer, how old are you?" And when I told her I was "just as old again as half," she went tripping away laughing, as if my answer pleased her wonderfully.

I almost hate that girl whenever I think of her calling with me at Mrs. Browns. There sat that great fat baby in the cradle, sucking his fist, with his face all plastered over with molasses candy, and that creature caught him up, kissed him, tossed him in her arms, and finally danced up to me with him, exclaiming, "That's Miss Slicer; bubby isn't afraid of Miss Slicer. Why the dear little fellow wants you to kiss him; don't you, bub?" At that he clapped his hands, laughed, and jumped toward me; his mother stood looking on so pleased and proud of her baby; and what could I do but kiss him. Pah! the dirty little imp! I sicken at the thought of it. Kate knew how I hated babies, and arranged it for the purpose of plaguing me. I know she did.

Here I have been sitting by the window nearly an hour, without seeing any one pass by. But there is a couple of men over in the grave-yard: they must be setting up a head-stone for old Mrs. Hart. I can't help thinking of what her son's wife said to me the day of the funeral; "She was sorry to have her die, for she could do almost as much work as any other person in the village." The only expression of grief that fell from her lips. Poor Mrs. Hart! she always

had to work like an old slave, but she is at rest now. Heaven preserve me from ever having to live with a son's wife! There is no danger of that, however, in my case, thank Providence. I couldn't help laughing the other day when Mrs. Hart told me "the old grey cat was dead; that the cat had the consumption and lived nearly a week without eating anything, and she felt real bad every time she looked at her, for she couldn't help thinking of poor old grandmother Hart." What ideas some people do have.

Here comes Bill Jones down the street with a basket full of parcels. I guess it must be sugar and raisins for the wedding-cake. I do believe Sarah Jones is going to be married. I should think her mother would have more sense than to allow her to take such a step. Only imagine! young things eighteen and twenty years old marrying. They're no more fit to take charge of a house than so many babies. Why here am I, thirty-fi—, well, no matter just about the right age, but nobody seems to think of it.

I think there ought to be a law made that no girl in Centreville shall be married, so long as those so much older, and better qualified for such a life, remain single. Some one ought to petition the Legislature to have such a bill passed.

There goes Dr. Hall into the store. They say he gave Patty Mills a powder of birch sawdust, and told her to add a teaspoonful of rum and a pint of boiling water to it, and take it to cure the pain in her side. Well, she is always complaining, and always gadding about, and asking the doctor to prescribe for her whenever she meets him, and I suppose he thought she didn't need any medicine, and that his dose couldn't hurt her; but I can't defend his practising such deceit. It savors too much of quackery. I shall not believe that he is a regularly licensed physician till I have seen his diploma. Mercy, I had forgotten that the bread was in the oven. I declare it's too bad! every loaf is burned as black as a dorky's face. But one can't always have their thoughts about them; besides I think seasons of reflection are beneficial to a person's mind.

It's so comforting, in fact, when neighbors are so wicked, to look into one's own heart and

find oneself as kind and obliging and good and
charitable as I am. I have no patience with these
mischief-makers and busy-bodies that go about
meddling with everybody's business. If the

would only stay at home and keep their tongue
(unruly members that they are) still, and attend
to their own affairs, as I do, this world would
be a much happier home I'm thinking.

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THE HUSBAND'S RUSE.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

Two handsome children—a boy of twelve, and a girl of ten years of age, were wandering together about a garden. They carried between them a great wicker basket, which they were filling with the choicest of the flowers, and exclamations of delight and exultation burst forth, as a bud or blossom more beautiful than its fellows, was added to the glowing collection which already graced the basket.

All was pleasant and harmonious, till the boy, Pemberton Walton, chanced to say,

"Look, Louisa, did you ever see such a beautiful rose? I declare," he added, laughingly, as he held it beside her face, "it's even prettier than you are yourself!"

Louisa's face flushed angrily; she pushed the rose away, exclaiming with a pout,

"I hate roses!"

Pemberton laughed, as he replied good-naturedly, "No, you don't, Lou, you only don't like their beauty to be praised at the expense of yours. Ah, Lou, Lou, jealous of a rose!"

But Louisa's pretty face remained clouded, and it was not till her companion's unfailing good-humor had borne a pretty severe test, that she deigned once more to smile and be agreeable.

Ten years later saw that same boy and girl united as husband and wife.

Time had made little change in them. The disposition of each remained as in childhood. Pemberton, the gay, careless boy, was equally open and good-natured as a man. And Louisa, with much that was amiable and good, still retained her besetting sin—her jealous, exacting temper.

It was impossible but that Pemberton should be fully aware of this unlovely fault in the "lady of his love," for it had been hers all her life, and many a time and oft, had he been forced to note it during their courtship; but he had the advantage of knowing also Louisa's many fine

and noble qualities, and he thought he was able to estimate exactly what risk he ran in trusting his happiness to her keeping. Besides, his almost unfailing good-humor enabled him to bear with, or laugh off her jealous fancies, as few men could, or would have done, and he hoped that his devotion, and her own good sense would, in time, cure her of her folly.

For a month or two after marriage, even Louisa was satisfied in the exclusive devotion of her husband lover. But when the wedding tour was over, and two honeymoons were passed, and the young husband, as was inevitable in the nature of things, began to return to old pursuits and occupations, Louisa was unable to endure this abridgment of her prerogatives—she could not bear to feel that she was but one of many objects of interest to her husband, when she had once been all in all.

She gave herself up to fit after fit of jealous wretchedness; tormenting her truly kind and forbearing husband, and annoying herself almost sick.

Did Pemberton come home half an hour late to dinner, or tea, he was sure to find his wife in a fit of the pouts, occasioned by his cruel desertion and neglect. Did he chance to omit the slightest attention or caress, to which she had been accustomed, she was certain to notice it, and he was often surprised by a shower of tears, the cause of which he could not even guess. Worst crime of all was it, he found, to profess ignorance on such occasions—that was but adding insult to injury. Do what he would, say what he would, unless he was entirely occupied with Louisa, to the exclusion of all other objects and thoughts, he found himself adjudged a cruel monster, guilty of making a fond and lovely wife "very unhappy."

In vain he sought by every reasonable concession, by playful raillery, and fond assurances

of undiminished affection, to tranquilize and soothe her—Louisa was jealous of the very cigars he smoked—the books he read—the friends he walked with—the horses he rode; and did he venture to have a pleasant chat with a lady friend, her lovely blue eyes turned absolutely green.

Pemberton, with all his good-nature, began to find things unendurable. Some way must be found to cure his wife of her folly, or she would render them both wretched. But how could it be done? Should he take her aside and reason with her on the foolishness and absurdity of her conduct? No, that plan had been already many times unsuccessfully tried.

Should he by a pretended flirtation give her apparently real cause for jealousy, and so cure her of her groundless fancies? The project seemed more feasible, but knowing Louisa's passionate and impulsive nature, he was positively afraid to attempt it—visions of daggers and poison passing unpleasantly through his mind.

He finally resolved to make an attempt to conquer her with her own weapons.

Accordingly, on coming home one evening instead of going to his wife as usual to dissipate the gloom he perceived on her brow, by his attentions and caresses, he threw himself silently on a lounge, without taking the slightest notice of her.

Louisa was astonished. Never before had her husband failed to greet her tenderly on his return-home. She did not know what to make of it. Though unwilling to compromise her dignity, she could not resist stealing a glance or two at him from under her eyelashes. She fancied he looked pale—and certainly something *must* be the matter, or he would never act so. Either he was sick, or some dreadful misfortune had overtaken him.

Quite softened by the thought, Louisa rose and coming up to him, said kindly,

"What is the matter, dear Pemberton, are you ill?"

"Headache," returned he, shortly.

"Oh!" said Louisa, affronted by his tone—and she said to herself as she resumed her seat, and took up the novel she was pretending to read, "Only a little headache—I'm not going to make a fuss over him for a trifle like that, when he causes me such torments, and then smiles at my agony," and her heart swelled, and her eyes filled at the remembrance of her sufferings.

Half an hour's silence followed.

Suddenly Pemberton sprang from his couch, and began to pace the room with gestures of great agitation, or suffering.

Louisa's fears returned. Something was wrong that was certain. She threw her book aside and entreated to know what was the matter.

"Oh nothing—nothing. Don't trouble yourself about me—pray go and finish your novel—don't disturb yourself. I see; it has come this—I may suffer headache, fever, neuralgic tortures, while the wife who once professed to love me sits and reads her novel. Talk to me about love grown cold, and changed affections—he continued, volubly, imitating her own strain—"I see but too clearly now, where the change lies. Why, when we were first married, remember that once, when I chanced merely to cut my finger, you were almost frantic with apprehension. You wanted to send for the doctor, and must needs bathe it in arnica, and don't know what—I must keep my bed—I must be bundled up to the chin in shawls for fear of lock-jaw. Now, I might have lock-jaw—scarlet fever—varioid and chicken-pox all at once and I don't suppose you would throw aside your novel to help me."

More than ever astonished at her husband's conduct, Louisa could only suppose his wild talk to be the result of feverish delirium, and was confirmed in her belief that he was very ill.

She followed him up and down the room, endeavoring to soothe him by expressions of affection and sympathy, and begging him to let her do something for him. "Might she not send for the doctor? or should she bring him a little toast and tea? or would he have his feet put in hot water, and go right to bed? or would he consent to let her apply just one neat little mustard plaster? it would give such instant relief to his poor head."

But Pemberton scouted at all her proposals—declared her offers came too late to change his opinion as to her indifference, and continued to rave about her unkindness, and the change he perceived in her feelings to him. The more Louisa protested her love and constancy, the more unreasonable and unconvinced he seemed to be; till she was ready to cry from mere vexation at finding all her protestations disbelieved, and her husband obstinately of "the same opinion still," in spite of all she could say.

At last, when he was quite tired out, Pemberton allowed himself to be so far softened by Louisa's persuasions as to permit her to lead him back to his lounge, to try to get a nap. She covered him with her shawl, and sat beside him smoothing his hair, till he appeared to drop into a slumber.

Remembering that she was needed to give some directions to her cook, Louisa endeavored

to rise noiselessly, with the intention of stealing softly from the room. But at her first movement Pemberton exclaimed,

"What is the matter? What is the matter?"

"Nothing," replied Louisa, quite flurried, "I was only going to speak to the cook a moment"

"Going to speak to the cook!" repeated Pemberton, contemptuously. "Pray, Mrs. Walton, make no excuses for releasing yourself from the dull task of attending a stupid, sick husband—pray go and talk to your cook."

"Dear Pemberton, how suspicious you've grown," said Louisa, really distressed. Her husband interrupted her,

"I remember the time, when nothing, however delightful, could win you from my side for a moment, when I had time to be with you—now, though I am ill, a miserable cook cannot fry a potatoe, but you must run to look on, and leave me to suffer alone."

"My poor husband, are you suffering much?" asked Louisa, soothingly.

"My greatest sufferings are mental," replied Pemberton, severely, as he suddenly hid his head in the cushions of the lounge, while his frame shook with a strange agitation.

Louisa flew to him in alarm; she was convinced he was about to be seized with some kind of a fit. She hastily snatched the cushions from

his face, and to her excessive surprise discovered her poor, sick, suffering husband convulsed with laughter.

For some minutes astonishment held her spell-bound—then the perception of her husband's ruse, and the lesson it was intended to carry, flashed upon her. She stood irresolute—half-angry, half-amused—in doubt whether to be indignant, or take part in the laugh against herself.

Fortunately her better nature prevailed; and having relieved her feelings by calling Pemberton "an unmitigated humbug," she joined him in a fit of unrestrained merriment.

She candidly admitted her defeat—acknowledged that Pemberton had proved himself an excellent mimic, and had not much overacted his part.

Better than all, she was too sensible a woman not to profit by a lesson so fairly set before her, and from that day dated a great reform in her conduct.

True, from force of habit, she sometimes seemed about to fall into her old jealous fancies; but whenever this danger impended, Pemberton was sure to be seized with a timely return of his feverish ravings; and so, by out-Heroding Herod, always contrived to remain master of the field.

VARIETIES.

BY A NEW CONTRIBUTOR.

A COUNTRY PIC-NIC.

"HERE we are," says the minister, cheerfully.

"And the cars not come," adds a pouting-lipped, rosy-faced damsel.

What a bevy of women—we beg pardon—ladies, from one year old and upward! What a galaxy of beauty! What beds of pinks and tulips and orange roses, and blue bells and butter-cups their pretty bonnets resemble! Just look at them; a rainbow chipped all into pieces could not resolve itself into a greater infinitude of coloring.

"Where's my Jim?" cries a corpulent lady, elbowing her way through the crowd with energetic pushes; "my Jim, I've lost little Jimmy, and the cars a coming."

"Here he is," says the pleasant pastor, smiling, "helping himself to the contents of your cake-basket." The fat lady almost collapses as she sees the last morsel of her favorite slice disappear. She looks wrath at him—but the minister is by; it won't do to scold—so she only grinds her teeth, and takes the wicked urchin with an affectionate (?) squeeze by the shoulder, muttering with peculiar emphasis, "oh, *you!*"—but here language fails.

Spit, spit—clatter, clatter and whew! with a whistle as loud as that of old Atlas, (who doubtless kept his spirits up in whistling under his burden) onward rush the cars. Now for bustle and confusion "worse confounded." In vain the panting minister exhorts to order; they might listen to his warnings from the pulpit, but in a railway station—never.

And this is going to a country pic-nic! To whirl past amalgamated trees, fences, farms, and a strip of blue-white river for miles, and rusticate in a grove on the edge of the rail. That is not the way *we* like to pic-nic. Give us the country frolic, where the wagons are brought on gay with red streamers and flags, and fresh dew-sprinkled roses; from wreaths and pendants of which peep out happy, smiling ruddy, faces. We prefer the old hay-cart, that Dick the farmer—joking, sunburnt Dick—heaped high with the nice-smelling hay only yesterday—and the scent of the clover yet clings to the rude vehicle. This with wives and little ones happy at our side, is country pleasure. Out with your flying cars; let

us stop to snuff the orchard perfume, to gather blackberries, to break off slender limbs and whip up the old cart horse, who knows we're only in fun, and wouldn't jog an inch further for prince or queen.

And then to drive home at a moderate pace over the old county road, hallooing to the farmers coming home with empty carts, singing snatches of pleasant songs; catching the swell of the scented fields, or the glory of the sunset clouds, joining in the hearty untrammelled laugh and innocent merriment of happy childhood—to get to the ancient homestead, its walls all brown and red with a century's moss, to lead the venerable working quadruped dressed up with leaves and flowers as he is, to his supper, and then to go in and do justice to the fresh doughnuts and cheese—this is the way to have and *enjoy* a country pic-nic. Maids and lovers take notice.

BAD BREAD AND BUTTER.

We have acquaintance with a bright fellow, rejoicing in the cognomen of "Musty Crusty." Those who know him very well call him Mustard—for it must be confessed his jokes sometimes sting. Those who do not pretend to intimacy (for the most part very small boys with cigars who imagine themselves men) nick-name him "Old Must." Well, "Old Must" is something of a genius in his line—being mostly favorable toward gunning and punning. We were talking of a very unpleasant person one day, when suddenly "Old Must" broke forth with,

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, I don't like Miss M—: shall I tell you the reason why?"

Of course the company wanted to know—so Musty put on a proper face and said,

"Well, it's because she's very ill-bred, and I defy you to find any so disagreeable *but her*."

LET THEM CRY.

THAT accommodating commodity, "exchange paper," says, "*Dutch babies never cry—long life to them.*"

Don't anybody who has "we toddling things," say "amen" to that. One might as well love eternal sunshine—a fadeless blue never broken into rich fragments of painting by the clouds. As soon would we possess an automaton, or the

figure from an old china tile as a baby that never cries. How could we prize the beauty or the good-nature of the little things without the shadows of baby grief as well as the lights of baby joy? The mother's love would be but half drawn out, till she saw the quivering lip and tears rolling over the innocent cheek. Then she holds her babe closer to her bosom, hushes him with sweet words, and sings soothing lullabys.

Shouting, bounding, crying childhood for us. We remember once offering three spirited, curly-headed children, a trifling reward if they would keep entire silence for the space of thirty minutes. And a long and most wearisome half hour that one seemed to us. There they sat,

each in her little chair, mute, motionless, with clasped hands and bright, restless eyes. The room was like a grave; and we could not forbear the thought, "suppose it were always so."

Let children be human. Let them laugh—let them weep. Let them fill the house with sunshine or the noise of lamentation. When you look at them for the last time, as they sleep in their white shrouds, with flowers strewn about their dead beauty, you could bear the wildest shrieks, came they only from *living* lips. Let children be children. The world will teach them all too soon to plant the smile where the tears should spring; to wear the mocking mask of gladness when the heart is full of sorrow.

HOW UNCLE JOE WAS CAUGHT.

BY ELLA RODMAN

We all felt perfectly safe respecting uncle Joe, ever since the dislodgment of that artful house-keeper, who was always sighing and pitying his loneliness; for, although he counted his money by its hundreds of thousands, he appeared to think that he had been sent into the world for the express purpose of contributing to the happiness of his nieces, nephews, and hosts of relations, that were as numerous as the legs of a centipede.

Poor man! he was scarcely more active in the catastrophe I have to record than Jack Bunsby, of happy memory, who was so relentlessly captured by the inexorable Mrs. Mao Stinger.

It was a bright autumn morning—one of those days when people feel happy from very small causes, and part of the old innocence that existed when the world was a baby comes back and makes us thankful for the blue sky and the warm sunshine—when "business is looking up," and all wear smiling faces. The hour was an early one, and the pave was consecrated to Wall street brokers, merchants' clerks, dressmakers, and school girls.

A long, green veil floated obligingly down the back of the bonnet, and exposed a face that drew nearly all the eyes that encountered it back for a second look. It was as pretty as the face of the wax-doll the little girl is playing with; and Miss Emily was quite as well aware of this circumstance as the many pairs of eyes could wish her to be.

She walked demurely on, pretending not to see; but presently a boyish face peered down into her own, and the books were taken from her hands with a manner of charming assurance.

Emily blushed, and said, "good morning, Mr. Buckley," in answer to his "good morning, Miss Halstead;" and then they talked of the opera and the last party; and Emily took care to speak very pleasantly to Clara and Ellen Newman, who passed them fearless; and the two walked on until they reached the corner where all the damsels at Madam C——'s school insisted upon being deserted by their attendants, in order to honor the pleasant fiction which madam indulged in, that *her* young ladies were too much engaged by their studies to think of such trifles as beaux.

Harry departed, thinking that Emily was a very

pretty little girl, and he didn't know but he must contrive to meet her again; and Emily walked on with a heightened color, as she called to mind Harry's flattering remarks.

The Halsteads were people who lived no one knew how, and made a show upon no one knew what; they had a handsome house, and gave very respectable entertainments, but Mr. Halstead never had been rich, and was always failing. Mrs. Halstead was looked up to as the principal wheel in the domestic machinery; and she had a manner of persuading people into the belief that she was quite able to accomplish impossibilities. She always dressed richly—had an imposing carriage, and an aspect of perfect serenity and satisfaction.

"Mother," said Emily, as she came bounding into the drawing-room, "Harry Buckley walked to school with me, this morning."

"Very well, indeed," observed Mrs. Halstead, approvingly, "the Buckleys are of a good old stock."

Emily walked to the mirror and arranged her ringlets, while Mrs. Halstead fell into a pleasant reverie. She was not quite sanguine enough to consider the walk equal to an offer of marriage, but Emily was very pretty, and there was no knowing what might come of it. The Buckleys' position was so decided that such a connection would establish *them* at once; and Emily noticed that her mother's good-night kiss, that evening, was much warmer than usual.

Things went on encouragingly for some weeks; Harry was invited to the house, and appeared to enjoy his visits there very much, had sent bouquets and bon-bons; and Mrs. Halstead received very blandly all insinuations upon the subject from her acquaintances.

But, one day, Emily came home very much out of humor; and the sharp-sighted mother soon ascertained that Harry Buckley had not made his appearance as usual. The next morning, Emily received a bow from him, as he passed her with Adeline St Clair; and instead of going to school, she turned back and poured out her griefs upon her mother's bosom. Figuratively that is, for, literally speaking, Mrs. Halstead would have been shocked at such a performance as involving the safety of her chemisette.

"Go up stairs, and bathe your eyes," said she, at length, "and say not a word of this to any one." She paced up and down the room some little time; until she had entirely completed her plan; and then she wrote a note and despatched it immediately. She was a perfect Napoleon where defeat was concerned, and only braced herself up with fresh energy.

But I believe I forgot to mention that Harry Buckley was a nephew of uncle Joe's; that important fact stated, we will now proceed.

The note was addressed to a person whom Mrs. Halstead called her "friend," and whom others called her "factotum." Mr. Miller was fond of oyster suppers, without possessing the means to indulge very often in such luxuries; he was, moreover, ready to be at the beck of anybody who gave frequent entertainments. He answered Mrs. Halstead's summons to appear, in person, without loss of time.

"You are acquainted with Mr. Joseph Buckley?" asked the lady, abruptly; and that point being satisfactorily settled, a long conference ensued, which ended in the above-mentioned gentleman's receiving a most unexpected call from Mr. Miller.

Uncle Joe sat innocently reading some prosy book, for which he was not ashamed, at forty-five, to use spectacles boldly and openly, and not screw a glass in the corner of one eye as is the now-a-days custom with antiquated beaux.

He pushed back the spectacles, and received Mr. Miller pleasantly, as usual; but, to his very great surprise, that gentleman remained a little distance off, as though afraid of being polluted by a close contact, and deliberately observed,

"My dear fellow, I have a pretty serious charge to bring against you."

Uncle Joe turned around in his chair, and gazed at him with an expression of alarmed interest.

"You are accused," said his visitor, "of having trifled with the affections of a most interesting school girl, whom you have beguiled with honeyed words to believe in your sincerity; and now that the poor child's heart is really interested, you have meanly deserted her."

Uncle Joe was, at first, alarmed; but, as Mr. Miller proceeded, he called to mind the face and figure that he had encountered while shaving, that morning, and the idea of his having made such havoc with the heart of "an interesting young lady" struck him so ludicrously that, very much to his visitor's amazement, he burst into a fit of laughter.

"This will not do, sir," said Mr. Miller, indignantly, "your levity is perfectly unfeeling."

Uncle Joe was frightened again. His mouth

suddenly collapsed, as he exclaimed, in a sort of incredulous terror,

"You do not *dare* to say that you believe me capable of such a thing?"

Mr. Miller was somewhat daunted by the flash of his eye, and uncle Joe continued, triumphantly,

"A sober, old fellow, like me, who scarcely ever leaves the house, and when he does, it is with eyes fixed on his own nose, or on the ground—it is really too absurd!"

Mr. Miller still pretended incredulity; when uncle Joe suddenly exclaimed, struck with a bright idea,

"I see it all *now*! It is that good-for-nothing fellow, Harry! A pretty scrape he has been the means of getting me into!"

"But how can I convince Mrs. Halstead of this?" persisted Mr. Miller.

"Mrs. Halstead?" repeated uncle Joe, "then it is that pretty little daughter of *her's*? What a shame for Harry to act so! The good-for-nothing scamp!"

Mr. Miller adroitly put into his head the magnanimous resolution of calling upon Mrs. Halstead to assure her that he had not run away with her daughter's affections; and uncle Joe agreed to go that very night.

He was very particular about his cravat, and brushed his hair to an alarming degree of smoothness; scowling all the time at his own reflection in the glass, and thinking it a very queer business. Mr. Miller came, according to his promise; and the two wended their way to Mrs. Halstead's.

That lady received uncle Joe with much embarrassment; and then he had a confused consciousness of bowing through a mass of sunny ringlets, blooming cheeks, and eyes and dress that matched the skies. Uncle Joe was not accustomed to ladies' society; and Mrs. Halstead soon drew him off for a private chat.

"Poor Mr. Miller," said she, with a most natural-sounding laugh, "how *could* he make so absurd a mistake? His friendship for the family," she continued, "often leads him to do strange things, and Emily's ridiculous penchant has made quite an impression upon him. She laughs at it, herself, now."

"It *was* absurd," said uncle Joe, with his good-natured laugh, "to suppose an old fellow like me capable of inspiring love in a beautiful young creature like that!"

"Girls of eighteen have loved men of forty before *now*," replied the lady, "but the *absurdity* of the thing is to suppose you capable of trifling with the feelings thus aroused."

"I wonder how *that* will work!" thought Mrs. Halstead, as she crossed over to Emily, and whispered to her to play her most effective piece.

It worked in this way. Uncle Joe very suddenly awoke to the fact that he was not particularly happy, and that he might be a great deal happier; and when Miss Emily turned to him with a beaming smile, and asked him if he liked "*La Fille du Regiment*," he would have said "yes" to anything. How Harry *could* be such a blind idiot he could not imagine; and he sighingly wished himself twenty years younger.

Mrs. Halstead was polite in the extreme, as if to indemnify him for the wound his feelings had received from "*that absurd mistake of Mr. Miller's*;" and he was invited to call again.

He went very soon; bouquets poured in—in-
vitations poured in—and finally, the proposal.

"Emily, you are to marry Mr. Buckley," said Mrs. Halstead, one morning.

"Why, *mother!*" exclaimed Emily, "*that old thing!*"

"You will have a carriage, diamonds, and a box at the opera," replied her mother, "Mr. Buckley is of a good old stock, and you can triumph very pleasantly over that impertinent Harry."

Emily thought a few moments—went to the mirror and sighed—went to the window, and saw Mrs. Effingwell's carriage and liveried servants; and just three months afterward she was riding beside uncle Joe in just such an equipage.

Harry, in a fit of despair, went off to California to dig for the gold that Miss Emily had wrenched from his grasp; and the rest of us went to the wedding, and abused the bride, and pronounced uncle Joe "an old fool."

N. B.—Uncle Joe is decidedly jealous of Mr. Miller. He thinks that he dines there entirely too often, and "wonders what Emily can see to admire in him."